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# Imprimatur

July 20. 1688.

*Hic liber cui Titulus,*  
The Case of eating  
and drinking un-  
worthily stated.

JO. BATTELY.

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THE  
C A S E

OF

Eating and Drinking Unworthily

S T A T E D ;

And the

S C R U P L E S

Of Coming to the

*Holy Sacrament*

UPON THE

Danger of Unworthiness

S A T I S F I E D :

Being the Substance of several Sermons ,  
Preached in the Parish Church of *S. Hellens*,  
*London.*

By HENRY HESKETH,  
Vicar of *St. Hellens.*

L O N D O N ,

Printed for *Walter Kettelby* at the Bishops  
Head in *St. Paul's Church-Yard.* 1689.

# CASE

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To the  
**GENTLEMEN**

And others my beloved

**Parishioners,**

**T H E  
I N H A B I T A N T S**

*Of St. Hellens, London.*

SIRS,

**I** Have now at last been able  
to comply with your request of  
making this Discourse publick :  
I heartily thank you for the good  
will you entertained it with at first,  
for the satisfaction you are pleased  
to say you received from it, and  
for the respect and kindness to me  
(for

afforded  
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(for that I know you intend) in your repeated wishes it might be published.

I am pretty well assured of your respect to what your own desires have formed, but I have no great reason to be so of others; whom therefore I must beg to consider that it was delivered in a plain, popular, Pulpit-way at first; and that as I have not concerned my self to alter it, so I could not have done it, without more time, and labour than I was willing to allow to it.

You must be pleased to stand accountable for it, and for my self I shall be no further concerned, than to wish it may have that effect upon others, that it hath had upon most of you; and I should not wholly despair of it, if Men were willing to receive satisfaction, as certainly they ought, in a matter of this moment.

I pray God Almighty preserve  
our excellent Church : open mens  
Eyes to see the truth of our Re-  
ligion , and incline all our Hearts  
to comply carefully with this, and  
all other institutions of our great  
Lord. To whose protection, and  
Blessing I heartily recommend you  
all.

---

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T H E

I pray God Almighty preserve  
our excellent Church: open many  
Eyes to see the truth of our Re-  
ligion, and incline all our Hearts  
to comply exactly with this, and  
all other injunctions of our great  
Lord. To whose protection and  
Blessing I heartily recommend you  
all.

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all*



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more*

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*pag. 212.*

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# INTRODUCTION.

**T**Here are few things more commonly instanced in the practice of Men, and none of more pernicious and mischievous consequence, than the ἀμείλια τῆς ἀνθρώπου as the *Greeks* call it, i. e. an extravagant humor of running out of one extremity into another.

I need not stay remarking the commonness of that, which is instanced in every days experience: nor seek for proofs of its bad effects, when we see nothing more to debauch the opinions and practices of Men.

For there being in almost all cases, two extream vices for one real vertue; it is very rare that Men running from the one, stop in the intermedial stage, or take up, till they come to the utmost extremity on the other hand. It's a hard matter to make a sober Convert, and so to bring a Man either to reform one Vice, or quit such a false Opinion, and evil Principle; but that he shall leap too far, and never think himself removed enough from it, till he sits down quite in the other extream.

A

The

The Nature of Man is sullen, or impetuous, and like a restive beast, either unwilling to stir at all, or to run away without any restraint or moderation, and our spiteful enemy is watchful and cunning, and knows too well how to impose upon us.

It is indifferent to him, in which extremity we fix, since he knows both to be equally destructive to us; and therefore he not only willingly permits, but sometimes purposely pusheth on a transition from one to the other, that he may the more effectually secure our destruction. Since he not only gratifieth our humor and affectation of novelty and change thereby, but cheats us into an opinion of being Converts, and having quitted our sins; when alas we have only shifted the Scene, but the same act is continued still; the same evil sticks close to us, only it appears in another Garb, and is acted in a differing instance.

There are not many instances in which all this is more unhappily visible at this day, than in Mens deportment and carriage towards the Holy Sacrament of the Lords Supper: from despising it on one hand, Men come to dread it on the other, and from thinking any preparation almost too much, they come to believe that none is enough for it.

Time was when Christians crowded to this Holy repast, as the Doves do to their own windows; and the good Fathers of the Church were employed in directing them  
how



now to come, and not in perswading them to it: heretofore want of due preparation was the crime, but now neglect and contempt is the great guilt: Men cannot have arguments against their coming unduly, and unpreparedly to the Lords Table; but they carry those arguments too far, and make them to conclude against their coming at all.

That which *S. Paul* used as an argument to reform one Error among the *Corinthians*, we have improved into an excuse of a worser among our selves; and what he intended to shew the danger of coming amiss, we make use of to fright our selves from coming at all.

Our duty lies in the middle, and both these extremities are equally distant from it; it is the latter of these which is the great distemper of this time, and which this discourse is designed to endeavour the cure of; and in order thereto to consider those words of *S. Paul*, *1 Cor. 11. 29.* which sound so terribly to some men, and which they have improved into so great an exception against coming to the Holy Sacrament, *for whosoever eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lords Body.*

From which words a great many Men have taken up a superstitious fear and dread to approach the Table of the Lord, and from thence have fallen into an unchristian neglect, and disregard of this service, apprehend-

ing some extraordinary guilt would be contracted, and some mighty danger incurr'd by any little failure in it, above what may be feared or contracted in any of the other services of Religion, though they do not perform them so well as they ought to do.

To this purpose you may hear them argue at this rate. You see what a mighty great deal of preparation is necessary to our receiving the Holy Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and that upon no less a hazard than eternal *damnation*: you hear the Apostle saying expressly, that *whosoever eateth this Bread, and drinketh this Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.*

And what now would you have us to do? We are very sensible of our own infirmity, and know too well how far we shall fall short (after all our care) of being *worthy* to ingage in such a sacred service of Religion, or discharge it so *worthily* as we ought to do; and therefore since we know this beforehand, is it not much safer to sit still, than to run so great a hazard? choose rather not to eat and drink at all, than to damn our selves by doing so *unworthily*.

This is really the case, and these are the reasonings of too many men; the great danger of *eating and drinking unworthily*, frights them from this service; and they chuse rather wholly to neglect their duty, than to venture

venture so great a stake upon the undertaking of it.

This is that error and fault of Men, that I would vindicate these words of *S. Paul*, from having any influence upon; and I am very confident, whether I can successfully do this or not; the Apostle was far enough from any such intention or thought in them: his meaning was only to direct to carefulness and reverence in doing this duty; and by no means, to discourage or fright Men from it.

In the prosecution of this design, I have proposed to do these three things.

I. To give a plain (though short) account of the sense of these words.

II. Draw some general deductions from them, which I judge proper to satisfy these fears of Men, and take off those objections which they make against coming to the Holy Sacrament, upon the reason of them.

III. To make some plain practical reflections upon the whole Argument.

## C H A P. I.

*The first thing proposed in this Discourse, is to give a plain Exposition of these Words; to which purpose it will be necessary to consider the import of three Expressions in them.*

1. **W**Hat is the true sense of eating and drinking *unworthily* in this place.
2. What *discerning*, or *not discerning* the *Lords body* means.
3. What we are to understand by *damnation*, and by *eating and drinking damnation*, in this Text.

By considering these we may perhaps gain something, towards the understanding the true intent and meaning of the Apostle in this place, and freeing our minds from those affrightments, which men are fallen into, from their mistaking of it.

1. In order to the understanding the true meaning of *eating and drinking unworthily*, it may not be unexpedient, to consider what the signification of the word is in other places, that secondly we may better know what there is to determine the sense of it in this place.

1. The

1. The word *ἀναξίως* which we render *unworthily*, may perhaps best be understood, by considering what the signification and use of *ἀξίως* is, which it is the opposite unto. Now though that do indeed signifie *worthy* in the strictest and most rigorous sense of worthy, yet in the New Testament it is oftner used to signifie that which is *fit* and *becoming*, or at least as often used in this sense as the other.

Thus (to instance in a few places) in *Luke* 3. 8. bring forth fruits *worthy* of repentance, that is, such as are becoming repentance, or as 'tis rendered *Mat.* 3. 8. *meet* for repentance, in *Rom.* 8. 18. for I reckon that the sufferings of this present world are not *worthy* to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in Christ; *i. e.* they are vastly different, there is no correspondence upon which a comparison may be made between them. *Eph.* 4. 1. that you walk *worthy* of the vocation wherewith you are called; *i. e.* suitably to it, and as becomes those that make profession of it. And so in all the places where Christians are exhorted to walk *worthy* of the Lord, *worthy* of God, and *worthy* of the Gospel; the true sense of all which the same Apostle expresseth, *Phil.* 1. 27. by letting their conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ.

And thus in all the places in the New Testament in which Men are either exhorted to endeavor, or declared to be *worthy* of the

Kingdom of God, and *worthy* of the future glory: you are not to understand *worthy* in the utmost sense of the word, as it means *merit* in the sense in which that is now become matter of Controversie, (for that is against the constant sense and language of the New Testament,) but only as it signifies *meet* and *fit* and duly qualified for such glory.

Just as most of the Schoolmen, when they come to talk closely of *merit*, distinguish between *meritum ex condigno*, and *meritum ex congruo*, and when they would assert mans *merit* before God, make it at last to dwindle into *meritum ex congruo*, i. e. no *merit* at all properly speaking, but only fitness and meetness, to receive blessing from him: and truly I do not know one place where the word is used of Man, with respect either to God, or future glory, or doing his duty, but it is used only in this sense, for *meet* and *fitting*, and so as *becomes* him in all these respects.

Now according to this sense *unworthy* must needs signifie *unfit*, *unmeet*, and *unbecoming*; and accordingly you shall find it is used in two places in the New Testament, which are all the places (I think) besides *this Cup*: where it is meet with *Act. 13. 46*. Seeing you judge your selves *unworthy* of everlasting life, and *1 Cor. 6. 2*. Are ye *unworthy* to judge the smallest matters? i. e. are you unfit to make peace among the brethren, and to umpire the small differences that happen between them?

This

This now is the signification, and this the use commonly of the word in the New Testament, *viz.* to signifie unfitly, unbecomingly, and not always *unworthily* in the strictest sense of that word.

But yet this is but the general signification of the word, and the particular is to be determined by that particular matter that it is applied unto; so that to determine that here in this place, we need only to inquire what that particular *worthiness* and *becomingness* is, which ought to accompany the doing any duty, or service of our Religion; and eating and drinking in the Holy Sacrament *unworthily*, will, and must needs be the contrary to it, according to this signification of the word.

Now the great and necessary qualification, to render the doing any service of Religion becoming and fit, is great reverence and devotion, out of a just sense of the sacredness of that service, and the greatness of that God, that it is done unto; and therefore to perform any such service of Religion irreverently, rudely, carelessly, and profanely, is to do it *unworthily*; and is that very unworthiness that our Apostle intends in this place.

And that we ought to understand it so here, I think I may safely conclude from these two further considerations.

1. The reason of the thing, which will not suffer us to understand *unworthily* in the strict

strict and rigorous signification of it; for then no man in this present lapsed state could avoid eating and drinking *unworthily*, after his utmost endeavour and care not to do so.

The best, and most devout Man living, falls short of that worthiness and perfection in doing this, or any other service of Religion, that it should be done with; he fails in many circumstances of that exactness, that ought to grace all religious performances.

The Lord is great, and cannot *worthily* be praised, as our old Translation renders that passage, *Psal. 96. 4. i. e.* It exceeds the power of Man in this imperfect State, to praise the great God in that sublime manner that he ought to be praised: in many things (saith *S. James*) we offend all, *Jam. 3. 2.* and in all (even our best things,) it is certain we offend in so many circumstances, that should *God be extream to mark what is done amiss*, no service of the holiest man living could expect to be accepted by him.

Who is sufficient for these things? crieth the inspired *S. Paul*, *2 Cor. 2. 16.* and yet he speaks it but of preaching the Gospel; it were perhaps proper to move the question concerning this service, and that with some advantage too. Who is sufficient or able to perform it *worthily*? and what Man is he, that can think he dischargeth it anytime, in every circumstance so as he ought to do? we may safely enough answer the question, and say not one.

So



So that the very reason of the thing concludes us to this sense of the expression ; for otherwise, no Man living ought to communicate, nor could do so, without eating and drinking damnation to himself; which I believe the strictest urgers of this place (to this purpose) do not believe.

Every Man finds it too true in daily experience, and every good Man puts it into his daily confessions, that he doth greatly fail, fall very short of doing this, or any other duty so *worthily* as he ought to do, and consequently doth always eat and drink *unworthily*, if that were the signification of that expression.

2. The second thing that concludes us to this sense of *eating and drinking unworthily*, is the expression that the Apostle explains it by afterwards in this Text; and we need but let him expound his own meaning, in order to our right understanding of it: now that he doth in the last clause of it, *not discerning the Lords body*; this is added by the Apostle both as an explanation of the precedent phrase, *eating and drinking unworthily*; and a reason too of that punishment that is due to him that doth so: *he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, doth not discern the Lords body*, and he that doth not so, *eateth and drinketh damnation to himself*.

This expression I shall choose to explain in the second place, as being indeed the true Key to this Text; and what the import of it  
is,

is, we may easily learn, both from the phrase, and that particular error and miscarriage of these *Corinthians*, which the Apostle doth here perstringe, and which this whole discourse hath a direct regard unto.

The Greek word  $\mu\eta$  διακρίναν signifies not differencing, or distinguishing the Lords body, and is the word commonly used to signify the differencing of meats and other things under the Law; and being applied here to the body of Christ in the Holy Sacrament, it signifieth plainly the eating and drinking the holy Symbols of it, as common things. The eating that bread, as common bread; and drinking that cup, as common wine; the putting no difference between that which is common, and that which is holy; the eating the Lords Supper just as men do a common Supper, or Meal in their own Houses, and making no difference in our respects and regards to the one, more than to the other.

For it is plain (and I shall have occasion hereafter to shew it fully) this was the great miscarriage and fault of the *Corinthians*, which the Apostle so sharply taxeth in this place: they did eat the  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\alpha$  the Love-feasts disorderly, and in great confusion, yea to excess and drunkenness; and the Holy Sacrament which they ate in the close thereof, they ate irreverently, and without any due sense of the sacredness of it; just as they ate at home in their own houses, without any sense of Religion,

ligion, or mystery in it, and without making any difference between that, and a common morsel of bread, or cup of wine.

This is the particular sense of eating and drinking unworthily in this place, and by this Key we may come to the true understanding of it; and though perhaps we may extend it further, and make it to comprehend some other failures beside this, yet we do it but by Analogy and proportion, in which we may possibly be mistaken, and in which our own reasonings may fail us; but whether they do or not, nothing but this is that *eating and drinking unworthily*, which the Apostle means in this place. So that although those other things may possibly cause Men to eat and drink unworthily in some sense, yet not to do so in the sense of this Text; and therefore Men should be infinitely careful, how they apply this to other things than what the Apostle did, or assert the same guilt and danger to be incurred equally in one as well as the other.

3. The naming of which, brings me to the third and last expression that needs to be explained, in his *eating and drinking damnation to himself*; in doing which I shall but need to consider what the strict and particular reference of damnation is in this place; for the word *χέουα*, being of a general and indefinite signification, and being used to express any judgment whatsoever, must be fixed only by the

the circumstances of the place ; and by that we shall best understand what it doth specially refer to.

I do not deny, but the word is sometimes used to signifie what we commonly restrain it to; *i. e.* that eternal *damnation* in hell that is prepared for the impenitent, and unbelievers; and those other appellatives of vice which the Scripture describes, such as *Whoremongers and Adulterers, Extortioners and Covetous, Drunkards, Murtherers, &c.*

But because it is sometimes used in that sense, therefore to understand it always so wherever we meet it, is a great mistake, and sometimes of very ill consequence. I could shew this in some other instances, besides that under present consideration, were not the truth too visible in this alone. For by this means Men have been frighted from the Holy Sacrament, and (as I observed before) sate down in a total disregard and neglect of it; chusing rather, and thinking it the safer side of the question, not to Communicate at all, than to run an apparent hazard of *damnation* by doing so.

And I must confess were this really the case, they would have at least some appearance of a reason to plead for themselves; and would almost stand upon the same ground with us, and have the same argument against coming to the Holy Sacrament, which we use to perswade them to the same.

The

The highest Argument that we have to this purpose, is that it is a plain duty, relying upon the expresse command of our dying Lord, which wilfully to transgress must most certainly be a damning sin.

Now the same would these Men have to plead against it, were this the sense of *damnation* in this place; and so would run no greater a hazard in not receiving it at all, than they do in receiving it unworthily and amiss; they must be damned in receiving it unworthily, and they can be no more, in not receiving it at all.

This I call a gross misunderstanding the sense of *damnation* in this place; for whatever it may signifie in other places, it is plain it doth not signifie so in this: And this is evident, if we consider what the punishments are, which were inflicted for this sin, which the Apostle instanceth in the following verse, *for this cause many are weak, and sickly among you, and many sleep*: i. e. This gross irreverence of yours towards the Symbols of his own Son's body and blood, hath provoked God to punish you with many sicknesses and diseases, and some among you have been cut off, and have died by them.

In all which there is not one word of eternal *damnation*, nor any mention made, but of temporary, of external, or corporal punishments only; nor is there any necessity of inferring the danger of damnation from these:  
for

for Men may be punished in this world, and spared, and pardoned in the next, and it is not only possible, but common and ordinary to be so.

Eternal damnation is the final excision, and last wrathful destruction of wicked Men; it is the last unmixed cup of Gods vengeance in which there is no allay of mercy, not one grain of favour mixed with it; but such Judgments as these here are far from being so: they are always medicinal, and preventive, to correct and amend former faults; and to prevent the last and final destruction. They are intended for the salvation of Men, and do not always so much as preface to their damnation. Yea when they proceed so far as to cut off Mens lives, they may be only correcting, and punishing of them here, that they may be finally spared hereafter.

And so the Apostle plainly tells these irreverent *Corinthians* that these punishments were, *Vers. 32. When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world, i. e.* God inflicts these judgments upon you, to bring you to a sense of the sin that caused them, and to learn you to reform, and abstain from those things, whose consequences you have found to be so bitter: they are so far from intending your eternal damnation, that they are purposely designed to prevent it. They are the medicinal chastenings of your good Father, which  
are

are inflicted indeed for this your great fault, but intended as expiations rather of the guilt, than eternal punishments for it.

This now I think is the plain, true exposition of this place, which I have therefore given in the first place; because it may be of good use to take off something of the terror that seems at first sight to be in it, and to let Men see, that these words rightly understood according to the purpose of the Apostle in using them, are not so frightful, as at first perhaps they might apprehend them to be, and may serve therefore in consequence of that, to take off something of that fear, and dread of coming to the Holy Sacrament, which their minds may have entertained upon the reason of them.

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C

C H A P.

## C H A P. II.

*Having in the former Chapter cleared the true sense of these words: I proceed in this to the second general that I proposed, to draw some general Conclusions from them, which may be proper to be considered in the present case, and to which I shall reduce (as to so many heads) what I intend further to say in this discourse; the Collections that I purpose, are these three that follow.*

1. **T**hat eating and drinking *unworthily* in the sense of this place, is a thing hardly to be committed by Christians in this age.
2. The supposed danger of eating and drinking *unworthily* is not a sufficient reason for Men to abstain from the Holy Sacrament upon.
3. The true purpose of this place is to deter Men from irreverence and rudeness in eating and drinking in the Holy Sacrament, and ingage them to that devotion and reverence, that becomes them that do discern the Lords body.

These



These are three material Collections, proper to be considered by all scrupulous persons in this case; and therefore I shall endeavour to the utmost of my power and skill, to discourse them with that plainness and evidence that they require and deserve.

I begin with the first, eating and drinking *unworthily* in the sense of this Text, is hardly to be committed by Christians in this age.

In order to the clearing the truth of this Collection, it will concern me to do these following things.

1. Shew what this eating and drinking *unworthily* was, and wherein this sin of these *Corinthians* did consist.

2. Consider the Circumstances that all Christians now are in, which set them almost above the possibility of being guilty of it.

3. I shall inquire what can be counted eating and drinking unworthily in proportion to this.

4. And consider in the last place, whether these also be not almost incompetent to Christians, especially to any that are concerned in our present case.

## S E C T. I.

**I**N order to my discharging the first thing undertaken, I shall need but to repeat a little of what I said in the explication of this Text, and this phrase in it.

Not discerning the Lords body is certainly the Key to the meaning of eating and drinking unworthily, and by considering the one, we may come to the understanding of the other; and by examining how the case stood with these *Corinthians*, we may easily understand both.

By their not discerning the Lords body, the Apostle means their not considering that this was an immediate service of Religion; and that the morsel of bread which they did eat, and glass of wine that they did drink were Sacramentally the very body and blood of Christ; they put no difference between these sacred Symbols of our Lords body and blood, and common food and drink; nor shewed greater reverence in eating and drinking the one, than doing so to the other; they ate in Gods House just as they did in their own, and made no distinction between this and a common meal.

Yea (and which is something worse yet) they did this not only thus irreverently, but in intemperance, and downright drunkenness; for so he tells them *vers. 21. One is hungry, and another is drunk.*

How this monstrous disorder happen'd among them, hath been hinted already; and may more fully now by giving a short account of the ancient practice of the Church in this matter. Now that briefly stood thus, the Holy Sacrament was usually prefaced unto by  
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a publick feast of Charity, which is called in antiquity *ἀγάπη* a Love-Feast, to which you have frequent reference in the New Testament; to this Feast every one contributed, and brought some portion, according to his ability, of which all feasted lovingly together; reserving some portion for the Holy Sacrament, which they always celebrated in the close of this Feast.

Now this grand profanation of this Holy Service happen'd thus: instead of feeding lovingly all together of what was thus brought by all, each one fed singly upon his own portion, by which it came to pass, not only that the poor had little or nothing to eat, but the rich had too much, which brought them to excess, and even to plain drunkenness: *one is hungry and another drunk*, in which sad condition approaching to the Table of the Lord, they were very unfit to consider the sacredness of it, and very unlike to pay that reverence that was due to it.

That both these things contributed to their not discerning the Lords body, and in consequence of that eating and drinking unworthily, we may fully satisfy our selves, by considering the Apostles dealing with them, in the latter part of this Chapter, where he falls upon this Argument.

For because they were so grossly ignorant in the reason and design of the Holy Sacrament, he explains that fully to them, from

*Verse 22d. to the 27th.* acquainting them with the Author, reason and purpose of this institution; that it was an immediate service of Religion, instituted by Christ himself just before his suffering, and instituted to no meaner a purpose, than to be a solemn rite of commemorating his death, which should be used in his Church till his coming again to judgment. *For I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lords death till he come.*

And because through their scandalous intemperance preceding, they so horribly profaned this service; therefore he shews them both the sin, and great danger of it, and presseth them to a serious care to reform it: as you may see in the 27, 28, 29, and 30th. Verses. *Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examin himself, and so let him eat of this bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh*  
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damnation to himself, not discerning the Lords body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged. In which words it is plain he refers to this scandalous abuse of theirs, aggravating both the guilt and danger of it, in words as high and dreadful, as could well be thought on; that thereby he might bring them to a dread of it, and to the use of those means which he prescribes in order to the reforming of it.

This (in short) was the eating and drinking unworthily that the Apostle so sharply taxeth, and God had so severely punished these *Corinthians* for; and when we consider seriously the horrible grossness of it, I believe we shall subscribe to the equity and reasonableness of both: this was so extremely foul and gross a profanation of the Holy Sacrament, that we cannot wonder either at the vehemency of the reproof, or sharpness of the punishment: it was such a crime, as was scarce ever heard of in a Christian Church, and at the very name of which (I am perswaded) a Christian heart cannot but tremble: if damnation in the most dreadful sense of the word had been threatned, or had been inflicted up on this sin, it had been no wonder.

## S E C T. II.

2. **L**ET us therefore enquire whether any Christian now needs much to fear, or can well be guilty of the like, and we shall soon find, that they are almost above the possibility of it.

1. For first these preceding Love-Feasts are now abolished, and wholly disused, and have been so for many Centuries of years: for these Feasts not only giving some colour of a reason to the Heathens to traduce the Christians upon, as if they indulg'd to all manner of sensuality and uncleanness in them, as they very well knew themselves did in their *Bacchanalia* and some other Feasts, but also giving too much occasion to exorbitancy and disorder among themselves; and coming in a little time to be abused indeed to some ill purposes, were by publick Order and Canon of the Church prohibited, and wholly laid down, and continue so to this day.

So that to us there is no such possibility of this disorder and excess, because we are out of the reach of that, which was temptation and occasion of it in them; and that custom and practice is wholly antiquated, and laid aside among us, which betrayed them into it.

2. And secondly the time of communicating in the Holy Sacrament with us, is wholly changed

changed from what it was of old for the same reason: it was then not only called the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, but indeed was so, *i.e.* in imitation of our Lords practice it was celebrated at Supper time; though I cannot but by the by note, that to me it seems plain, it was celebrated *antelucano tempore*, during those hot and raging persecutions in *Pliny's* time; when the Christians were glad to meet early before day to perform the services of their Religion, for fear of discovery by their persecutors.

But however that were, it is certain that generally it was observed in the Evening, at Supper time; a time which was really more inconvenient in this respect, and when men were in more danger of not observing it with that reverence and devotion, that became both it, and themselves too: and that for these two plain reasons.

First, that at night Mens minds and thoughts are commonly more loosened, and far from that seriousness and consistency, that they are usually in a morning. Mark it, and you will commonly find a great difference between a Mans morning and evening devotions: in a morning our thoughts generally are both more clear and united; but by that time the hurries of the day are over, they are more puzzled and disordered with the business that hath employed them; so that they cannot so easily recollect themselves, and fix upon God and  
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Religion again: upon which reason it is thought by some Divines, that the *Psalmist* compared his early devotions to incense, but those of the evening to the lifting up of his hands, or to the common sacrifice.

So that in this we have greatly the advantage of them, and the wisdom of the Church hath thought fit upon this reason to change the time for the observation of it long ago; we receive it now in the morning, and that upon Sundays and Holydays too. *i. e.* both when our thoughts are more active and united, and when we are out of all temptation from other business, and before we can well have disordered our selves with any.

Secondly, Another advantage on our side lieth in this, that in the morning we are usually fresh, and free from any iteams of intemperance, and from any temptations to it, which in the progress of the day men too often meet with, and by too easie compliances with, are too often ruffled and disordered by before evening.

Men are generally sober in a morning, and *S. Peter* thought Men could not be drunk at the third hour of the day, *i. e.* (according to the *Jewish* way of dividing the day) at nine in the morning; and though perhaps in this degenerate age and place, some exceptions might be produced against the Apostles rule; yet it is not ordinarily and commonly so: Men are neither in such danger of being over taken,



taken, nor so commonly so in a morning, as (God knows) they too commonly are seen to be at night : so that upon this reason also we have something the advantage of them in this respect, and cannot well come drunk to the Lords Table, unless we be beasts, and monsters of intemperance.

3. And yet there is a third instance, in which the Christian Church hath taken care to secure us in this instance. And that is its injoyning us to receive the Holy Sacrament fasting. For this there are several Constitutions and Canons of the Church producible, by which certainly it hath taken the utmost, and most effectual care possible for the prevention of such profanation of this Holy Service.

For because that the custom of Communicating in the evening continued longer in some Churches than in others ; though they could not break that custom, yet by this institution they thought they provided sufficiently against all possibility of this profanation : and indeed so they did, for it was not possible for them to come drunk to the Holy Sacrament in the evening, who had fasted all the day preceding : this constitution would either certainly change the time of the Holy Communion, or it would secure it against this profanation, or rather (as we see it hath done already) it would secure both purposes.

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This Custom hath now generally obtained in this, as well as all other Churches. Men generally receive the Holy Sacrament fasting, and I believe few do otherwise, unless it be out of some necessary respect to health, or some present infirmity; in which the Church doth, and always did allow a dispensation, well knowing that God *requireth mercy and not sacrifice.*

4. To these we may add in the fourth place, that high respect and veneration, that Men generally have, and have long been accustomed and taught to have for the Holy Sacrament, even above any other service and ministry of Religion.

The truth is, instead of profaning the Sacrament by our Common and irreverent carriage at it, we have run on the other hand into a superstitious fear and dread that keeps us from it; and I believe there is not one instance in a whole age producible of a Mans being drunk at the Lords Table.

The worst of Men, the worst profligate and debauched will lay some restraint upon themselves, both before, and after the Holy Communion, and we may commonly see that they do so. Men have generally more veneration for Religion, than to go drunk to Church, or dare to appear before God, when they are so unfit to do so.

And yet even these Men have a higher sense of, and a greater veneration for the Holy

ly Sacrament, than other services of Religion, and a mightier horror and dread of coming carelessly, and without respect unto it. Yea the very same men that dare so irreverently and regardlessly attend other Ministries of Religion, yet are seen to be very serious and devout in this. They that can sit at prayers, as if God were rather petitioning and praying to them, than they to him. They that can lay themselves down to sleep at a Sermon, and perhaps sooner fall into sleep on a hard bench there, than the softest down in their own houses: they (in a word) that can behave themselves in Gods house, with as little reverence and shew of devotion, as they do in a Warehouse or a Stable: yet when they approach the Table of the Lord, seem generally very reverent and devout, and I hope really are so.

5. There is yet a fifth thing that may pertinently be observed, as of effect to secure Men against this profanation of the Holy Sacrament; and that is their having been so long taught what a mighty deal of preparation is necessary to it, and having been so loudly alarmed with the great danger of communicating unworthily in it.

This hath been the current Doctrine, and the common way of dealing with Men, for some ages. The great business of the good Fathers was not to perswade Men to come to the Holy Sacrament, for that they always accounted

counted their necessary duty, and till this last age, none ever counted to pass for Christians that neglected it; and therefore their business was only to direct the zeal and devotion of Christians in this instance, and not to excite it, to direct and instruct Men how to come acceptably and as they ought, and not to argue with them about the duty of coming: and therefore there is so much met with in their writings about the necessity and way of due preparation, and so little about the obligation to come: many books written to instruct Men in the methods of due preparation, but there was no necessity of insisting upon that, which is our chief task and business at present.

For in the latter part of this feculent, and almost worst of ages, Men have run their instructions and doctrines into the other extreme; pressed so much the necessity of an extraordinary preparation, and aggravated so mightily the danger of receiving *unworthily*, that Men are frightened from the Sacrament, rather than invited to it; and have thought it (as I said before) safer to keep wholly from it, than to run so great a hazard in the observation thereof.

These things (we find) stick fast in Mens minds yet, and it is a hard thing to dispossess them of that superstitious fear, that these doctrines have struck them with: Men are now in more danger to run into the contrary  
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extreme, than to fall into this; in more danger to stay wholly from the Holy Sacrament upon this dread of it, than to run to it carelessly; and without any due regard of the sacredness of it.

Upon these reasons it may (I think) safely be said, that Christians now are in little danger of this sin; and almost out of a possibility of eating and drinking *unworthily*, in the sense of this Text, and which the Apostle taxeth the *Corinthians* for.

### S E C T. III.

**H**AVING proceeded so far upon the strict sense of this place, and the direct design of the Apostle in it: I go on to a material scruple, and a very important inquiry, very fit to be considered and resolved. And that is, whether nothing be eating and drinking *unworthily* besides this? doth a Man never eat and drink *unworthily*, but when he comes drunk to the Lords Table? doth not this open a gate to very great looseness and carelessness, and make communicating *worthily* a very light and easie thing? to what purpose needed the good Fathers of the Church, to have taken so much pains to direct Men how to fit and prepare themselves for this service? and have pressed the observance of those prescriptions with so much earnestness, as they did, if this were the only instance in which Men could eat and drink *unworthily*? The

This I call a very considerable inquiry, and therefore I shall endeavour to give it as plain and full satisfaction, as I am able. It seems to consist of several parts, to all which I shall endeavour to suit proper answers in these following propositions.

I. Whatever Men may say or think in this matter, this only is that **eating** and drinking *unworthily*, that the Apostle means in this place, and to which he threatens this punishment.

This I have cleared already, and need not stand repeating it again: not *considering the Lords Body*, but eating the Holy Sacrament as a common meal, being as regardless and intemperate at the Lords Table, as Men commonly are at their own, was that sin of the *Corinthians* which the Apostle here taxeth, and which he calls *eating & drinking unworthily*.

Now if Men would consider this, it would be one good step towards their satisfaction in this case, and of good use towards the removing their fear of eating unworthily. For why should men fear incurring the same guilt, unless they committed the same sin? and while they are very sure they shall not commit the one, why should they discourage, and afflict themselves with fears of the other?

It is neither safe nor fair dealing to apply passages of Scripture beyond their own proper intendment: and few things have done more harm in Divinity than this. As we cannot establish, or prove the truth of doctrines from

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thou art very sure, thou shalt not commit the same sin? and (let me add) when if thou hast the least sense of Religion in thee, and dost in any measure discern the Lords body, thou canst not commit it.

But now some Men may yet reply, what did this passage so solely concern the *Corinthians* that it respects none else? is there no use that we may make of it? nor any instruction to our selves that we may improve it into?

I answer, why yes we may, and there is scarce any other such passage in holy Scripture, but we may improve so too: and there are two very useful improvements that we may make of this to our own advantage.

1. The first is to ingage our utmost care and caution against the same sin: and this is the prime, principal, and most proper improvement of it, to take heed that we do not sin after the similitude of transgression that they did.

This the Apostle tells us in a like case; the threatenings of punishments, that fell upon the *Jews* *οὐτοι ἀπ' ἡμῶν ἐξυμνῶμεν*, were our examples, and intended as admonitions to us, that we should not lust, and become Idolaters, and murmurers as they were. 1 Cor. 10. 6. and 10. and it ought to be just so here also: the threatenings and punishments of the *Corinthians*, for their gross and scandalous profanation of the Holy Sacrament, ought to caution us against the like irreverence. But I  
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do not understand any good reason, why we should afflict our selves with apprehensions, and fears of the same punishment, while (thanks be to God) we are far enough from the same sin, any more than there is reason for those men presently to expect the Plague, the exterminating Angel, the fiery Serpents that destroyed the Idolatrous and Lustful *Israelites*, who were never guilty of any uncleanness, or idolatry like theirs.

2 But we may go further yet in our improvements of this, and such passages in the Holy Scriptures, *i. e.* to ingage our care not only against the same sin, but any thing that looks like it, or comes near it.

It is not safe coming within the reach of a danger, nor approaching so near as the Verge of a sin, if a man can help it: a wise man will not only beware of the same sin, that he sees so sharply threatned and punished, but even of any that looks like it. And as every Clergy-man that ministers before the Lord, may by the sin and punishment of *Nadab* and *Abihu* learn to be very careful in the discharge of his sacred function: So every Christian by considering the sin of the *Corinthians*, and what befell them for it, may learn how greatly it concerns him, to be devout and reverent at the Lords table, and to take heed of every thing that looks like a profanation of that Sacred Ordinance.

But as I do not know any reason, why he should think every little failure of his, to be the same unworthy eating and drinking that they were guilty of, no more do I know any cause, why he should presently dread the same punishment, that was inflicted upon them.

2. But I advance a second proposition in further answer to this question, *viz.* That although this be the only true notion of eating and drinking *unworthily* in this Text; yet it is possible that Men may fix that notion upon other things, by the rule of Analogy and proportion. I mean there may perhaps be some other things that may cause a Man to eat and drink *unworthily* in some proportion to what the *Corinthians* did. So that I am far from saying that no man needs fear eating and drinking *unworthily*, but he that is drunk at the Lords Table. There may possibly be other things to bring a man within that guilt, as well as that; and this is as much (I think) as can be required in this objection. But then I say withal these two things; which I would have always considered as the conditions of this concession.

1. That whatever those things are, that men think to bring within the compass of this guilt, they do it but reductively, and (as I said) but only by analogy and proportion. Those sins whatever they be, are not primarily intended in this place, but brought in only by

by our own arts of deduction, and reasoning, in which we may possibly be mistaken, and which are far from being so certain, as the discourse of the Apostle is. So that if men will needs bring in other things within the compass of this guilt, and within the reach of this punishment, besides what the Apostle intends and speaks of; they ought to be infinitely careful, and very sure that the Analogy will hold, and that their own deductions be rational and certain. This is absolutely necessary in all arguments that proceed upon proportion: the cases and circumstances must exactly correspond, or else the argument will not only be weak, but trifling too.

And when we consider how uncertain the most confident mens reasonings commonly are, and how very subject they are to be mistaken in them, it will be a hard matter to know certainly when their inferences may be depended upon, and when not. So that men have great need to be very careful in their discourses of this matter, what they do determine to be eating and drinking *unworthily* besides what the Apostle meant: for though they may seem to themselves (and perhaps others too) to have the safer side of the question, and to pursue a design which may seem the better of the two, *i. e.* to secure a mighty reverence to the holy Sacrament, above what the other doctrine seems to do.

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Yet they may be so far mistaken, as thereby to occasion a greater mischief, and while they go unwarily to ingage men to come with that exactness of preparation and care, that they would have them to come with; they may possibly fright them from coming at all; and (to deal freely and plainly) I do not know a more likely way to do this by, than by being too free in such inferences, enlarging the notion of eating and drinking *unworthily*, and extending it to things, which it is certain the Apostle never meant.

I am very much mistaken, if this be the safer side of the question. I think it much better that a man retain some sense of his duty, and take some competent care to do it; though it be but imperfectly, and far from that exactness that it ought to be done with; than that he wholly neglect it, and live as if we were unconcerned in it: and for my own part, I would much rather bring men to do their duty, and set about it as well as they can; than by any doctrine of mine encourage them to sit down in a careless neglect, and disregard of it. I would much rather encourage men to their duty, than fright them from it: and therefore as I will not be very forward to make any thing eating and drinking *unworthily*, which I have reason to believe the Apostle did not intend: so I will not be hasty in agreeing with them that do, unless I be very well satisfied that the Analogy

logy is true, and that the circumstances in both cases be the same.

2. Another thing that I would have observed here is this, that nothing can be eating and drinking *unworthily* in analogy to what the Apostle means here, but that which argueth or infers as great an irreverence to this service, and as gross a profanation of it, as this of the *Corinthians* made them guilty of.

Their eating and drinking *unworthily* consisted in this, and therefore if men make any thing else to be eating and drinking *unworthily* like them, they must prove the same, or as great irreverence and profanation to be in it. If they can find any other thing, which equally hinders men from *discerning the Lords body*, or yielding any more respect to the sacred Symbols of it, than the *Corinthians* did, then I will yield that that may be allowed to come within the guilt of eating and drinking *unworthily*, that the Apostle here refers to.

This is that Key that lets us into the Apostles meaning in this Text, and opens to us his sense of eating and drinking *unworthily*: and therefore if men will use it to any other things, they must see that the wards exactly agree, or else it will do no more service to them in this cause, than a common Key will do towards the opening a Lock, which it never was fitted for. The *Corinthians* did eat and

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drink *unworthily* because they did not *discern the Lords body*, and therefore those that do eat and drink *unworthily* like them, must as little *discern the Lords body* as they did. This is the rule that we must proceed by in this case; if we will conclude rightly concerning any other thing, it must be something that sets men as far from discerning the Lords body, and renders them as unfit or unable to shew any becoming respect to it, as this disorder of the *Corinthians* did them; otherwise it is not eating and drinking *unworthily* in proportion to them: in this the Analogy must truly hold, or else all our deductions will miserably fail.

## S E C T. IV.

**H**itherto we have been smoothing the way, and so far (I dare say) we have gone upon sure ground, but now we must advance to a more uncertain and slippery path, and to that in which the difficulty pincheth most.

3. And that is the third thing proposed, *viz.* to inquire what can according to this rule of proportion be admitted to be eating and drinking *unworthily*, as these *Corinthians* did: what it is that can hinder us from *discerning the Lords body*, and paying that reverence and respect to it in the Holy Sacrament, that men ought to pay; as that disorder

der and intemperance of these persons did them. This is the main question, and the resolution of it will set us pretty well to rights in this difficulty.

There are but two things, that (after my best considering of this question) I dare pitch upon, to bring into any comparison, with this unworthiness of the *Corinthians*: and they are these, gross ignorance and wilful resolved impenitence. I name these two, because I think I can make the correspondence to hold, and I name no more, because I cannot see that Analogy to hold in any others. Upon the reason of one of these men cannot, and upon the other they will not *discern the Lords body*; and therefore in both cases are as far from any due respect and reverence to it, as the *Corinthians* were. I shall consider them distinctly, and examin them upon this reason, of not *discerning the Lords body*.

1. Gross ignorance, I mean it in the great principles of Christian Religion, especially in that great mystery of our redemption by Jesus Christ; when men understand little or nothing of Christs coming into the world, or of the reasons of it, or that bitter suffering and death that he underwent for us. When they know not, what the reason of this institution was, or what our Lord would have signified in it.

If any adult Christian be thus grossly ignorant, and being so, communicate in this service,

vice, I do not know how to excuse him from eating and drinking *unworthily* as the *Corinthians* did: for it is plain, in this case he cannot discern the Lords body. He will look upon the Elements, but as common Bread and Wine: he will not consider that they are the Symbols of Christs body and blood, and that the breaking of the one is to signifie the breaking of Christs body on the Cross; and the pouring out of the other, the shedding of his blood for our redemption, and that our communicating in these is communicating in the blessed effects and benefits of both. He doth not know that by this solemn rite of Religion, he is to commemorate with gratitude, and transport, the amazing love of his dying Lord, and that in this he may expect those communications of divine grace, that shall strengthen and refresh his soul, as really and truly, as his body is by the Bread and Wine.

And being thus profoundly ignorant in these things, such a man will eat that morsel of Bread, and drink that Wine, but just as these *Corinthians* and their fellow *Grecians* used to do the like in the end of their feasts, as a Concluding Morsel, and as a Grace Cup, in token of that love which was amongst the guests, for so they used always to end these their conventions. And just like them he will be far enough from apprehending any thing of Religion and Mystery to be in it, and consequently



sequently to that, far enough from that devotion and reverence that becomes every Communicant in this service.

This was the reason why converts in the ancient times of the Church were usually kept in the rank of Catechumens for some time, and competently instructed in the principles of Christian Religion, before they were admitted to full Communion, and to this service, and this is the method that the Church of *England* proceeds in to this day to have all baptized persons Catechised, and competently instructed in their Religion, and thereupon Confirmed, before she admit them to the Lords Table. And (by the way) I would to God, that this were so carefully kept up and practised, as it should be, and then we should have but little reason to fear any mens such gross ignorance, or communicating unworthily upon the reason thereof.

2. The other thing that we may allow to be the cause of *eating and drinking unworthily* in proportion to this of the *Corinthians*, is resolved wilful impenitence.

In this case it is as plain the Analogy doth hold, or indeed exceed rather: and the *not discerning the Lords body* is alike in both cases; a resolute impenitent wretch doth as little discern the Lords body, as the *Corinthians* did, and (besides that) doth despight to it; instead of *shewing forth the Lords death*, he comes to avow it; instead of commemorating the love  
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and blessing of it with joy and transport, he comes to put a scorn and affront upon it; instead of reflecting upon it with sorrow and shame for the sins that caused it, he comes to repeat it, and to justify all the barbarous indignities of it: instead of improving it into an argument of repentance and reformation, he comes to deride it, to insult over it, and resolved to continue in his sins, in plain defiance and spight of it.

This in the Language of the Apostle is called *Crucifying afresh the Lord of glory, and putting him again to the same open shame; trampling under foot the blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was redeemed, and should have been sanctified.* Heb. 10. 29. And truly is in effect, a seconding all the malice and spight of the *Jews*, avowing the treachery of *Judas*, justifying the Sentence of *Pilate*, and vindicating the barbarous and remorseless cruelty of the *Roman Soldiers*: yea, and let me say, is in him that professeth Christianity really exceeding, and outdoing them all.

The guilt of most of the orher is capable of some extenuation, either ignorance, prejudice, or interest: but what shall excuse such a mans guilt? or can be pleaded in extenuation of it? who hath been baptized into the faith of Christ, and solemnly vow'd love and obedience to him, as his Saviour and Lord, and yet wilfully outdoeth the greatest indignities and affronts, that his most treacherous servant,

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or most implacable enemies could offer to him?

This was one great reason, why the discipline of the Church in her primitive times of purity was so very strict and sharp. Why she was so quick to observe, and as careful to punish all notorious and profligate offenders, by suspending them from all Communion with her, and not admitting them to this highest act of it, 'till they had given full testimony of their repentance, and sound amendment; well knowing how unfit such persons are to communicate in such sacred and divine mysteries, besides a great deal of other mischief that they do. And were this discipline preserved, and duly exercised, as the *Church of England* requires, and desires it should: there would be none to incur this horrible guilt, or be guilty of this lamentable profanation; the honour of the Holy Sacrament would be secured, and this high profanation of it be effectually prevented, and provided against.

# S E C T. V.

**A**Nd if we consider things well, we shall find that things are not so bad among us, but that both these instances upon which men may Communicate *unworthily*, are pretty well provided against: or however that they are not committable by any Christians  
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that offer themselves to the Holy Sacrament, or have any fears upon them of coming *unworthily* to it; let us consider how circumstances stand in relation to both.

1. And first as to this gross and scandalous ignorance, how much soever some men have made it their business, to cry out against, and taken liberty to traduce the members of our Church as a company of blind and ignorant creatures; thinking that there could be light no where, but where themselves shined, and that nothing but darkness and ignorance must succeed, when such lights as themselves were removed, and their instruction of the people ceased.

Yet thanks be to God, care is taken that people be competently instructed in the principles of Christian Religion, and I hope much better than they have been; the generality of the members of our Church I believe do competently understand their Religion, and any one is impardonable that doth not. I am sure instruction and knowledge is not hid from them, but they have both in as plentiful a measure, as it may be the Church hath ever enjoyed. It is not easie for them to remain ignorant under such advantages and means of knowledge as they enjoy, and if they apply their minds to them (as the Church begs them to do) they cannot do so.

I would not be afraid to have the comparison made between the members of the  
*Church*

*Church of England*, and the profelites to any of the various sects among us; if the tryal were made, it would be found who are the ignorant: who truliest understand what Christian Religion means, notwithstanding they may be undervalued, and reproached by ignorant, conceited and supercilious opposers. If I may be allowed to speak my observation; I would say, that of all the people that I ever conversed yet with, some that think so highly of themselves, have I found to be most truly ignorant. Knowing and well skill'd (I confess) in the little distinctions of their sects, pert and bold in quarrelling with the Church, and offering their little exceptions against it, &c. a sign that in these they are chiefly instructed; but as really ignorant in the true grounds and principles of Christian Religion, as the meanest of those, which they so scornfully and imperiously pity as poor ignorant people.

But these things call me too much out of my way. I only mention them to shew, that men cannot well be counted so grossly ignorant, as to bring them under the danger of eating *unworthily* upon that reason; and that if any should chance to be so, it is their own fault only, and the Church is wholly free, and to be acquitted from being in the least accessary to it; but I pass the further prosecution of this, and proceed to what is more pertinent to my purpose.

And

And that is to shew by what measures a man may judge himself, and his knowledge in this matter, and what those measures of knowledge are, that will set him above all this danger; and I dare pronounce him to have attained to these, that hath so much knowledge as enables him to understand that Christ died for the redemption of mankind, to satisfie for the sins of the world; and to purchase pardon for men upon the Conditions of repentance, and faith in him; that the Holy Sacrament is instituted to be a commemoration of this death of Christ, to give God Almighty hearty and devout praise for it: and to assure us, that if we truly believe in Christ and his merits, repenting us of our sins, and resolving by Gods grace to lead a good life, we shall be pardon'd for what is past, and enabled to perform what we resolve for the future truly upon.

These are no mighty arduous or difficult measures of knowledge; a man that is a grown Christian, and hath lived under the instruction of the Church, can hardly be thought so ignorant, as to come within the danger of eating and drinking *unworthily* upon this reason: he will be able to discern the Lords body, to understand that this is a sacred and religious service, and to put a difference between it, and a common meal: he will understand what it means, what he ought to do, what to expect, and what posture to put himself

self into, when he doth approach to the Table of his Lord.

2. But the more important and seeming difficulty is yet behind, and that is to apply what I say to the second thing I mentioned, to wilful impenitence, which is both the greater, and seems to be the more common evill of the two. And yet I think I may safely adventure to say of this, what I did of the other; that it is hardly competible to any Christian, but (to be sure) not to any that is desirous to come to the Holy Sacrament.

The reasons of my affirming this I shall give presently, when I have premised one thing; and that is this, that it be always remembered what I am speaking of, namely wilful, obstinate, resolved impenitence. I am not speaking of impenitence that proceeds from meer carelessness; from want of consideration, from irresolution and instability of mind; from the violence of temptations, and want of being true to our aids and assistances against them; much less of breaking our vows and good purposes, and failing to make good our pious promises, and resolutions, after we have repented, and in some measure reformed, and so proving eventually and finally impenitent.

But I am speaking of a wilful obstinate sinner, that resolves to live and die in his sins, and be damned for ever for them; this is that impenitence that I am speaking of, and this

is that man that I am inquiring after if any such be to be found: I say, if he be to be found, which I verily believe he is not, at least amongst those that call themselves Christians, and have not wholly renounced their baptism; much less among those that keep up the practice of religion, and would (but that they are fearful) come to this Holy Sacrament.

1. First then let us inquire and search among those that retain the name of Christians, that keep up a form of Religion, and are not actually turned Renegado's and Apostates from it: let me see the wicked'st, and profanest of those, that dare either tell me, or his own conscience, that he resolves never to repent and amend his life: this is a thing next to impossible for any, that believes any thing of his Religion; that hath any sense of a future state, and of the terribleness of that divine wrath, and those dreadful torments in hell, that all impenitent wretches must most certainly undergo in it; the stoutest sinner in the world must sink under the apprehension of these, and not be able to bear up against his own mind, and the terrors of his conscience, when he reflects upon them; and there are but two ways, by which men defeat the effect of their belief, and fears of these things, so as to dare to continue impenitent under them.

Either



Either first by banishing as much as they can all thoughts of, and reflections upon them; bringing themselves to a stupid careless temper of mind, that they may live in a total disregard and forgetfulness of them, without all sense of them, and without thinking a thought becoming a man, or a Christian: And when they cannot do this, but their thoughts will pursue them, and break in upon them, as sometimes they will, whether they will or no; then flying to company, and sensualities, and thereby diverting, or drowning the clamor of their own minds; just as those wretched Parents who sacrificed their children in the valley of *Hinnom*, were forced to drown the noise of their dismal cries, with the louder one of Drums and Trumpets.

Or Secondly, by quieting their minds with some thoughts and hopes of repenting hereafter; this is the grand cheat that men put upon themselves, and the common artifice by which they sooth their own minds, and keep them in peace, and make a shift to continue and go on in an unreformed state, although they do believe, and sometimes think of the dismal danger thereof.

These are the two great frauds that the grand enemy puts upon sinful men, and hath learned them to put upon themselves too; but for which, it were next to impossible for any man that hath the least measure of Chri-

stian faith, any sense and belief of a future state, durst continue in an impenitent condition: but still in neither of these cases, doth the man resolve to be impenitent, and so is not the person that I am speaking of; in one case the sottish man neglects, and thinks not of repentance, but in the other he thinks, and hath some hopes of it too: he hopes he may repent, and reform hereafter, though he be so miserable and vain, as never to put these thoughts in execution: so that in both cases he is far enough from obstinacy, and a wilful resolution never to repent; so that still I say, a resolved impenitent is scarce to be found in the whole crowd of Christians, no not the most profligate and profane among them.

Much less, Secondly, among them that keep up the practice of Religion, and either do, or would come to the Holy Sacrament, if this fear did not hinder them: it is not to be supposed that any of these are resolutely and designedly impenitent; if they should, they would give the lie to themselves, have not only their impenitency, but the most wretched hypocrisy to answer for, and so be doubly *unworthy* should they communicate in this service.

But this case is clear, and needs no further inquiry into; such persons are in an actual course of religion, and the services of it, and far enough from that wilful impenitence that we are discoursing about: they are so far from  
re-

resolving never to repent, that their only fear is, they repent not enough, that they are not reformed and holy enough; and consequently are far enough from the danger of eating and drinking *unworthily* upon this reason.

But this case of impenitence may yet require some further inquiry into, in order to some scrupulous persons fuller satisfaction in it; for it may yet be doubted, whether nothing but resolved wilful impenitence doth bring a man within the danger of this guilt; what are we to think of eventual impenitence? and what shall we judge of the case of that man, who goes indeed to the Holy Sacrament with a purpose, and resolution to reform, and amend his life, but afterwards is false to his purpose, and fails to execute his good resolution? doth not this man eat *unworthily*? were it not better for this man, not to come to the Holy Sacrament at all?

This is a case that will deserve to be considered, and the rather because I fear it too often happens, and is known to be matter of common scruple in this thing. Men are too commonly false to those good promises, that they make to God and themselves; and those good purposes that they fix upon at the Holy Sacrament: and knowing this too well, they are afraid to come to the Sacrament, for fear they should not be so good as their promise; their own sad experience hath taught them how

desultory, and unconstant their resolutions and tempers are; how strong the temptations they may afterwards meet with, and how weak their own virtuous good purposes yet be; and therefore they think it safer to stay a while 'till they have made some trial, and 'till they have a little better strengthened their good resolutions and tempers, than to venture presently upon that service which they may abuse and profane, by being false to the resolutions they take up, and the promises which they make in it: This is the case, and to the scruple taken up upon it, I return these three things in answer and satisfaction to it.

1. That every man ought indeed to be true to his vows and promises as near as he can; and when he hath taken up such a resolution, and given his faith to God he ought to perform it, and to do his utmost to stand to it.

It is certainly a dreadful fault to play fast and loose with God almighty, to promise, and never take any due care to perform what a man doth promise: there is not a sadder instance of a loose, careless, trifling spirit, than to be prodigal in our promises, and niggardly in our payments of them; to be forward upon all occasions to promise great things to God, what reformed, what good men we will become and be, but yet to be regardless and careless afterwards whether we be such or not, and never to apply our selves in earnest to make good what we have promised, and

and to put our good purposes in execution.

2. But yet Secondly, a mans doing thus afterwards, doth not make his Communicating in the Holy Sacrament to be eating and drinking *unworthily* in any proportion to what is intended in this Text.

His having received the Holy Sacrament may aggravate the guilt of his after failure ; but that subsequent failure doth not so affect his precedent communicating, as to render it eating and drinking thus unworthily ; if the purpose of the mind be then serious and sincere, his receiving the Holy Sacrament is far enough from being unworthy or faulty ; and (as I said) his failing afterwards doth not affect it all.

But then do I consider what I say ? can that purpose of mind be sincere and serious, which afterwards is not put in execution ? doth not a mans failing afterwards to make it good, shew that he was perfidious and an hypocrite in making of it ? why no (I say) it doth not, a man may be in earnest and sincere in making a promise, and taking up a resolution, and yet possibly fail of making it good afterwards ; his failing afterwards is no argument that he was not in earnest when he made it : it is argument indeed of his carelesness and irresolution, but it may arise from a thousand reasons, besides his falsehood or hypocrisie when he made it.

Many a man in the time of affliction, and sickness (for example) makes fair promises to

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God,

God, what he will be, and what he will do, if God please to spare him; and this (I doubt not) really and in earnest, and with a sincere purpose of mind at that time, to be, or to do as he promiseth; and yet afterwards that sense of things may wear off, and that purpose of mind abate, and that specious promise may come finally to nothing: but this is not because the man was not then really in earnest, but because afterwards he is careless and trifling, and easily led away with temptations that interfere with his former promise, and purpose of mind.

And so (I doubt not) it may be, and too often is with men, when they come to the Holy Sacrament, their pious purposes for that time may be sincere, and in earnest, and yet afterwards wear off, and come to nothing.

3. And therefore Thirdly, I affirm a man in this case doth come with one great qualification which should attend his communicating in the Sacrament; *i. e.* a purpose of repentance and reformation, and which will most certainly secure him against all possibility of eating and drinking *unworthily* in the sense of this Text, or any like it.

So that instead of staying away, for fear that he should change his mind afterwards, he ought (I think) the rather to come, that he may not do so: the great reason certainly lies on this side; seeing there is not any better course that he can at present take to fasten  
his

his good purpose, and to secure it of effect, than this: for by this means he will make his promise more solemn, and affecting upon himself, cause it to stick the deeper and closer upon his own thoughts, and receive that grace most infallibly from God, which if he be faithful and true unto, his pious resolution will continue, and he may be enabled to act according to the intention of it.

# SECT. VI.

4. **I** Add now a fourth thing worthy to be considered in order to our satisfaction in this inquiry, viz. that whatever the sense of eating and drinking *unworthily* is in this Text, or whatever men can think to be like it; *discerning the Lords body* will secure them from it.

What *discerning the Lords body* means I have shewed already, and I need repeat very little of it again: it means these two things.

First, putting a difference between the consecrated Elements, and common Bread and Wine; the looking upon the Holy Sacrament as an immediate duty and service of Religion, and consequently performing it with that devotion and seriousness, that reverence and respect, that men use to shew in other services of Religion: the want of this was the cause that made the *Corinthians* to eat *unworthily*, and provoked God to punish them with

with sundry diseases and death, as he afterwards tells them; they did not make any difference between this, and a common meal in their own Houses; they did not take it to be any peculiar act of Religion, they came intemperate and *drunk* to the Lords Table; and therefore (to be sure) were far enough from that reverence and devotion, that so sacred a service ought to have been performed with.

Secondly, *discerning the Lords body* means something more; not only to look upon this Holy Sacrament as a solemn and immediate act of Religion, but as the Sacrament and immediate representation of Christs body, *i. e.* his body broken and slain for the sins of the world; and the Communicating therein to be the commemoration of his death, and partaking in the blessed effects of it; to look beyond the Elements to that which they are designed to signify, and Sacramentally are; to look upon the bread not as common bread, but the substitute of Christs body; and the wine not as ordinary wine, but the figure of his blood; and so regarding the whole service, both as the most devout and solemn commemoration of Christs death and passion, for the expiation of our sins; and partaking as truly and effectually in the benefits and blessings of his body and blood, as if we did eat and drink that very body and blood themselves.

This



This is the great end of this service, and the reason of our Lords institution of it; and to *discern the Lords body* is to understand it so, and look upon it as such; which it is most certain these *Corinthians* were far from doing: either so ignorant as not to understand the reason of it, or so grossly irreverent and careless as not to consider it; for had they done either (much more both) they could hardly have been guilty of such profaneness, or of eating and drinking *unworthily* as they did.

And that is what I would say in this period, that whatever the sense of eating and drinking unworthily is in this place, the *discerning the Lords body* will secure men from it; and this I shall endeavour to make plain in these following considerations.

1. The not discerning the Lords body is here made the reason of their eating and drinking unworthily; this I have cleared already to be the reason both of the sin and punishment too: from whence it is plain, that discerning the Lords body would secure from both; for if men eat and drink unworthily, because they do not discern the Lords body, then if they do discern it, they will not eat unworthily; for the old rule is true in morality as well as nature, and will hold in this instance as well as others, take away the cause, and the effect will cease.

2. But

2. But Secondly, this appears clear in the nature of the thing; for there is a direct and immediate vertue and power in discerning the Lords body, to cause in men all those qualifications, that render them meet for this service, and sufficiently secure them from eating unworthily, as the *Corinthians* did, yea and from doing so in any sense like unto them.

For First in general, if men discern the Lordsbody, they will presently perceive that this is a most sacred solemn service of Religion, and not any ordinary thing; and by this will not only be admonished of that reverence and devotion, that it ought to be performed with, but strongly induced to it. Men naturally have some sense of reverence and awe upon their minds, when they are addressing themselves to devotion, and when they ingage into the services of Religion. And so they will have here also, when they consider what a solemn service of Religion this is, and hath always been esteemed to be in the Christian Church; and truly they can hardly be otherwise, if they have any sense of Religion, or any dread of the Almighty upon their Spirits.

And Secondly, if men discern the Lords body here, so as to understand the special reason of this institution, that it is to commemorate the mighty love of our Lord in dying for us; that it is to be a religious solemn representation

tation of his meritorious bitter death, and passion for our sins; they will find that it will even naturally beget in them repentance, and faith, and joy, and charity, and thankfulness, and a very high sense of the love of God and Christ towards poor sinners.

These are the highest and meetest preparations for the Holy Sacrament, and those qualifications that fit us for the receiving of it; and the death of Christ is the highest argument, and most powerful means of effecting these in men, that God Almighty hath to offer or can use with them. The Apostle seems to count it irresistible, and such a one as cannot miss of effect upon men that consider it. 2 Cor. 5. 14. *The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all were dead, &c.* And truly if Men do thus judge, if they do seriously reflect upon the transcendent and amazing love of Christ in dying for the salvation of sinners, it will even *constrain* them to repentance and faith and love, almost whether they will or no: if the grace of God be irresistible in any argument of the Gospel, it is certainly so in this; and I will adventure to say it is so far so here, that those are monsters of Men, or they do not consider things as Men, that can resist, and defeat the effect of it.

So that the Holy Sacrament being so sensible a commemoration of this death, the very visible representation of it, the evident crucifying

crucifying of Christ, before our eyes, as the Apostle speaks, *Gal. 3. 1.* the true *discerning* of it, and of the *Lords body* in it, will be of the same effect to produce all these things in us: I appeal to the experiences of good men for the truth of what I say: let them tell you what a mighty efficacy they find in the Holy Sacrament to this purpose; and how powerfully they feel their hearts moved to these things by it; and truly if we consider the natural causality of things, we shall be inclined to think it almost impossible it should be otherwise: let us consider them a little singly.

1. As for repentance, whether it imply sorrow for sin, a sense of its mighty evil and danger, and a resolution against it, or all these together, as indeed it doth, what can effect this in me, if the Holy Sacrament do not? can I see the Lords body broken, and his blood poured out (as I do in the Holy Sacrament) for sin, and to make the great atonement to the divine justice for sin; I say, can I see this without a sorrowful reflection upon my own sins which had a hand in this suffering? Or can I doubt what a mighty evil sin is, which could not be expiated by a meaner sacrifice, than the death and suffering of the Son of God? or of how dangerous and insupportable effect that punishment must be, which the Son of God could not bear without horror and astonishment, without

out fainting and death? or lastly can I consider all this, without some resolution and purpose to reform from sin, and to beware of that whose consequences and issues I see to be so dreadful and insupportable? I am sure I cannot consider these things, but they will have some effect upon my mind; and I am sure, if they have not, I do not duely consider them.

2. And as for faith, whether it respect the gracious declarations, or kind promises, or terrible threatnings in the Gospel, or all these; can I doubt the truth of any of these, when I see the son of God die to confirm it? can I question whether God be gracious and ready to forgive sin, when I see him exposing his own Son to death, that he may with honor do so? can I doubt his promises to all penitent sinners, when I see the truth of them sealed in his Sons blood? or can I think that the divine threatnings of wrath and vengeance against all impenitent wretches, will not most certainly be executed on them, when I see God inexorable to his own Son, and letting him suffer and die, rather than permit sin to pass unpunished?

In a word, the whole Covenant that God hath made with man, the new Covenant of grace and mercy, which the Gospel is the joyful publication of, is here (as it used to be of old) ratified and confirmed by blood, and the blood too of the Son of God; which is  
such

such an assurance and confirmation of its truth, as can never fail us, and beyond which our faith cannot desire a greater.

3. And then as to a mighty sense of the love of God to poor Man, what can so clearly (and almost beyond desire) assure us of it, as the death of his Son? you may see how the Scriptures triumph in this, and magnifie it as the mightiest instance, the highest exaltation of the divine love, that is conceivable; and how can I possibly question this, when I see him parting with his own Son, his only Son, the Son of his bosom and dearest love? yea exposing him to suffering and misery, to pain and shame, to death it self, nay to that ignominious and cursed death upon the Cross, rather than poor Man should perish eternally, and there should not be a way to save him by?

4. And lastly, as for joy in this love of God, as for praise and thankfulness for it; what can effect these in my soul, if the representation of Christs death in the Holy Sacrament cannot? had I seen him hanging upon the cross, bleeding, fainting, swooning, dying, and with expanded arms ready to receive and embrace me, it could not have affected me much more, than the visible representation of all this in the Holy Sacrament may do. If I reflect upon it then as I should, (and that I shall do if I *discern the Lords body*) I can scarce entertain the thoughts of it with less than

than rapture and transport: but I am certainly the most ill natured person living, and for ever the most unworthy of the blessings of it, if I fail in any measure of joy, and thankfulness, that I am able to express.

These now are even the natural effects of discerning the Lords body, and they are such things as will make us *meet partakers of these holy mysteries*, as our Church speaks, *they will set us far above that unworthiness that the Corinthians were guilty of, yea or any other thing that can be counted unworthiness in preparation to it.* By all which things my fourth proposition is I hope made good, and brought to an issue. And so is all that I intended to say on this first general Collection.

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CHAP.

## C H A P. III.

*I advance to the second Collection that I made in order to the taking off the exception that men make against coming to the Holy Sacrament, upon the reason of these words, viz. That the possibility and danger of eating and drinking unworthily, is not a sufficient reason for men to abstain from the Holy Sacrament upon.*

**I** Add this Collection, to come up more closely to the exception that men make against this service, and that which they hope to excuse their neglect of it upon. The danger (they tell us) of receiving *unworthily* is great, and the Apostle saith expressly that it is so: now we have great reason to think our selves unworthy to come, and to fear we shall come unworthily, if we adventure to come; and therefore think it the safer course not to come at all, than run so great a danger in coming, we are very unwilling to damn our selves; and we hold it the safer way to stay away, and venture it to Gods mercy, than by coming unworthily to incur the plain danger of damnation.

— This is the great exception, and the general plea of men in this case; and at the first hearing



hearing it seems to argue great modesty, and regard to a man's eternal salvation; and therefore deserves to be considered by us. Now though what I have already said was intended to satisfy this exception, and if truly considered, be (I hope) of good effect in order thereto; for if men consider that eating and drinking unworthily in the sense of this Text, is a sin that they can hardly be guilty of; and when they consider themselves, may be sure they are not; it may surely enable them to surmount this scruple; for while they are so far from the sin, they need not be afraid of the punishment.

Yet I advance this Collection in order to the further satisfaction of it, and when Men are convinced in this point also, that if they were in any likelihood, or danger of eating and drinking unworthily; yet that were not a sufficient reason for them to abstain from the Holy Sacrament upon, then it may reasonably be hoped that they will no longer stick at this exception, nor hope to be excused upon the reason of it.

This therefore is that which I am going to make good the truth and reasonableness of; that the possibility of eating and drinking unworthily is not a sufficient reason for Men to keep away from the Holy Sacrament upon, nor fit to be admitted as an excuse in this case; and therefore how honest and sincere, how conscientious and tender soever Men

may account themselves in staying from the Holy Sacrament upon this exception, yet it is a temptation and a snare, a very great error and mistake, and that which will never bear them out in this omission: and this I shall endeavour to make good, first by the circumstances of this place, and the Apostles discourse in it; and secondly, by some arguments founded upon the truth of the thing.

1. From the circumstances of the Apostles discourse in this place; there are many things in it, pertinent to my purpose, but I shall only briefly observe these few that follow.

First, the *Corinthians* were grossly guilty of this sin, they did eat and drink unworthily in the most notorious and scandalous manner possible; the Apostle plainly tells them so, instances in evident matter of fact, and blames them with that sharpness, that so foul a matter justly deserved.

Yea secondly, he aggravates the sin and guilt of this miscarriage, to a very high degree, and threatens it with a very sharp and severe punishment.

And yet thirdly after all this, he doth not give them any the least allowance, or liberty to stay from this holy service, till they had repented of, and reformed sufficiently this miscarriage: he doth not tell them, that their unworthiness render'd them unfit to come to the Table of the Lord, or gave them a dispensation from it; he doth not advise them to stay  
away

away for the future, till they had better fitted themselves, for fear of damnation by coming unworthily.

You do not read one word spoken by him to any such purpose, but rather directly the contrary: *let a man examin himself, and so let him eat; and when ye come together tarry one for another, and if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together to condemnation*: in all which the Apostle doth not advise them to intermit this service, and let it alone, 'till they had better consider'd it, and better prepared themselves for it; but he requires them still to keep up the practice of it, but to reform their great faults and errors in it; to come still together to *eat this bread*, only to *examin themselves*, to consider what they were going about, what they were doing, that they might eat it becomingly as they ought to do.

He taxeth very severely and sharply, the fault in doing the duty, and presseth earnestly the reformation of that fault; but he doth not make the fault an exception against, or dispensation against the duty, nor say one word, that might allow or encourage their intermitting of it, by reason thereof; from whence ( I think ) I may safely collect thus much, that what the Apostle said to the *Corinthians* concerning the sin and danger of eating and drinking unworthily, was never intended to hinder Men from eating, nor designed to be an excuse and plea for Mens

not doing so, as some are pleased to make it at this day.

For if it had, there is no doubt, but he would have given some plain intimation of it; or at least have said something, from whence Men might have collected that to be his meaning; we cannot suppose, that he would have been silent in so very great, and concerning a case; and not have given Men some warning, rather than let them run on in a fact which was sure to pull down such judgments upon their heads.

It seems plain the Apostle had no such thoughts of this matter then, as some Men have now; he never thought that the sin, or danger of doing a duty amiss, might be made an exception against doing it at all, or that threatening damnation to eating and drinking unworthily, should scare Men from eating and drinking at all; he takes what care he can, that the duty may be performed, and the error in doing it effectually reformed: but he never makes the danger of the one a dispensation from the other, nor lets fall the least word that can be interpreted to such a meaning; he tells them indeed what a great sin it is to eat and drink unworthily, and he tells them what punishments it makes them obnoxious unto; but he doth not therefore tell them they may stay away from the Sacrament for fear of committing the sin, or incurring the danger, or that it were safer for them

them to keep wholly from the one, than venture the hazard of the other: no; and he doth not do this, when they did actually commit the one, and when they did as really suffer under the other.

Now the Improvement that I make of this procedure of the Apostle, and this last named circumstance relating to it is this; that therefore the care, possibility, and fear of eating unworthily, should not be thought a sufficient plea for not eating at all; the Apostle did not allow or encourage Men to stay away from the Holy Sacrament when they did greatly profane it, when they did eat unworthily in the grossest sense; much less then may Men stay away from it, only upon a suspicion and fear of this, and of that punishment that is due to it.

This I take to be a true way of arguing, and worthy of consideration in this matter; the *Corinthians* were extreemly faulty in this thing, not only were in danger of eating unworthily, but actually did so in the grossest manner; and yet the Apostle saith not one word of their staying away upon that reason, which he certainly would have done, had he thought this cause of just exception, and that it had been better for them to stay wholly away from the Holy Sacrament, than to contract so great a guilt, and incur so dreadful a punishment by their coming amiss, and not as they should do.

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This I confess is a negative argument, which is not always, and in all cases good and concluding; yet in such a case as this it certainly is so: if a thing be no where said in Scripture, which (if it were true) is very necessary and importing to be known; and if it be not said there, where it was very proper, and necessary it should have been said; then we may from that silence of the Scripture conclude against it: if we deny this argument, we shall hardly be able to make good the sufficiency of the Scriptures, or the faithfulness of the inspired penmen of it; we must be forced to entertain mean thoughts of the great *S. Paul*, if we can think that he knew of any such thing, and yet would not reveal it, when there was so fair an opportunity for doing so, and when it was so very necessary, and of such advantage to be known.

2. But I shall proceed to add some other considerations, which will be as so many rational arguments for the truth of our present collection; which was the second way that I promised to make it good by: I shall insist upon these five that follow.

1. Our Communicating in the Holy Sacrament is a plain necessary duty.

2. The possibility of doing it amiss is no greater, than of our doing other duties of Religion amiss, which yet we our selves count necessary to be done, and do keep up the practice of,

3. The

3. The punishment or danger of doing this amiss is no more dreadful, than what may be feared upon the like failure in doing other duties amiss.

4. Whatever sin or danger there can be in eating *unworthily*, there is as much, or greater in not eating at all.

5. The danger of eating *unworthily*, is that which is occasioned only by our own default, and which we may correct, and get out of the reach of.

These are plain considerations, pertinent to our present purpose, and which it will highly concern all that labor under any scruples and fears in this case, seriously to weigh, and consider well.

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C H A P.

## C H A P. IV.

*I begin with the first of these Considerations, which is indeed the foundation of all the rest, and which when I have cleared, the reasonableness of the other will easily follow: the Argument is this, the Communicating in the Holy Sacrament is a plain, express, necessary duty.*

**I** Should think, I need not be put upon the proof of this in a Christian audience; nor required to make good that, which no one that hath read, and believes the Gospel can deny: and I must confess, to me it is matter of great wonder, that any Christians should look upon the Holy Sacrament otherwise, than a necessary standing duty and service of their Religion. I am very sure, it relies upon as plain and express a command, and upon as weighty and great a reason, as any ministry in Christian Religion either doth, or can do; and would men consider both these things, they could not remain doubtful in this matter; they could not look upon the Sacrament as a thing of choice, and left to their own freedom whether they would observe it or not; but tyed upon them by plain and peremptory



remptory precept, and made matter of their necessary and fixed duty.

And to the end that all Christians may look upon, and esteem it as such, I beg that these few things among many others may be considered by them.

1. That the Holy Sacrament is instituted, ordain'd, and commanded by our Lord, in words as express and plain, as ever any thing could, or ever was commanded by him: I shall need for your satisfaction in this, but barely to repeat the words of the Evangelists, three of whom mention the institution of the Holy Sacrament: *Mat. 26. 26, 27, 28. and as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to the Disciples saying, take eat, this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying drink ye all of this: for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* Here it is plain, the Sacrament is instituted by our Saviour, and delivered to his Disciples with a command to eat and drink of it; and you meet with the very same words, *Mark 14. 22, 23, 24.*

In *S. Luke* the matter is something plainer, where it is not only instituted by our Saviour, as the others relate it; but a command given for their doing it likewise after his death in remembrance of him: *Luk. 22. 19. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them; saying, this is my body which is given*

*given for you, do this in remembrance of me.*

And that it was not a command that injoynd the doing of this at that time only, S. Paul shews clearly in 1 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25, 26. where it is observable that he speaks of it as a thing, which our Lord charged him also with as well as the other Apostles. *For I have received that of the Lord, which I also delivered unto you; that the Lord Jesus in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said take eat, this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me: after the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this Cup is the New Testament in my blood, this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me: for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lords death till he come.*

I beseech men to consider what is said in all these places, and then to say if any thing can be plainer; if there ever was, or could be a more plain command than this is, *do this in remembrance of me*: if this be not an expresse command, never any was such; and if we may disobey this at our pleasure, I know not why we may not disobey all others as well.

2. It is not only a command, a positive institution that relies only upon the will and authority of Christ commanding it, but upon a very great and good reason, and is recommended upon an argument that shews it to be eternally reasonable and becoming. Not only

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*do this, as S. Matthew, and S. Mark speak, but do this in remembrance of me, as S. Luke, and S. Paul relate the matter; which the latter repeats again, as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye shew the Lords death till he come.*

These words make it to relie upon a reason that is both becoming, and obliging also, even until the final coming of our Lord to Judgment: for nothing can be more reasonable and fit in it self, than to keep up in the Christian Church, the solemn and most grateful remembrance of Christs death; and they that can think otherwise, are unworthy to share in the benefits of it.

Besides the instituting of it to this end, makes it perpetually obliging also. I mean to the end of the world, and as long as there shall be a Christian Church in it; for so long it will be fit to keep up the memory of it; and this reason will not only hold, but improve and grow stronger in every succeeding age, and period of the world, in which the sense and memory of it will be in danger to expire, and wear off: so that every such age will rather have greater, than lesser reason, to keep up this solemn commemoration of it.

3. To these intimations I may add one thing very considerable to our purpose, from the practice of the Apostle, and the circumstances of his discourse in this Chapter; a learned Man hath taken notice of them before

before me, so that I shall but just name them.

First, that the Apostle takes so much pains to instruct the *Corinthians* in the right way of Communicating in the Holy Sacrament, and to reform the profanation of it, that they were guilty of.

Now can any man reasonably think, that he would have done this; if he had not looked upon it as a necessary duty tied upon Christians, by Christs own command and institution? Certainly no, he that gives direction how to do a duty, supposeth the obligation, and necessity of it, or else he speaks to little purpose. And (as that great Man speaks) can any man think the way and manner of doing an action to be a duty, and yet that action it self no duty? this is not supposable.

And we may be sure, the Apostle would never have spent so great a part of this Chapter in directing how to eat and drink, how to order and prepare themselves for it, but that he looked on it as a duty necessarily incumbent on them; nor be so impertinent as to concern and busie himself, in directing the circumstances of an action, which was not necessary to be done, but arbitrary, and at their pleasure whether to do it, or no.

The second circumstance is what I observed before, that he did this even when the *Corinthians* run a very great hazard, and incurred a grand guilt, by their profanation of this

this service, and coming so unworthily to it.

Certainly had the Apostle looked upon this, as any thing less than a necessary duty, he would have gone another way to work with them; he would have discoursed to them at another rate, and have told them it were much the better and safer way, to stay away from the Sacrament, than incur so great guilt and punishment by coming so unworthily: this would have been the advice, that a great many Men now according to their principles, would have given to them, and indeed do give themselves, and others too.

But it is evident the Apostle speaks not one word to this purpose, nor knew of any warrant he had to do so: he had no authority, to grant them any indulgence, or licence to stay away, though they were apt to come so very unfitly. He was to recommend it as a necessary duty, and to press the serious and becoming observation of it; but he had received no warrant from the Lord to dispense with that observation: he would have them to look upon the Sacrament as a necessary standing service of their Religion; to count it their duty to eat and drink, and his province was only to direct them how they might do it acceptably, and not to their *condemnation*.

These Considerations are sufficient to convince all Christians, that this is a plain necessary, indispensable duty, instituted, and intended

tended by our Lord, to be a standing service in his Church: 'till his second coming to judge the world.

And its being so, becomes one very good argument to our present purpose, and a good foundation to superstruct the truth of our observation upon; for that which is necessary must be done: and the danger of doing it amiss will not excuse the neglect of it.

And this I advise all scrupulous and timorous persons in this case to possess their minds in the first place with the steady and serious belief of; as a thing that will go a great way towards silencing all their exceptions against coming to the Holy Sacrament: where scruples and fears may at any time arise in their minds, let them remember this is a necessary duty, and it will be a good answer to them all. I may sin in coming to the Lords Table, but it is my necessary duty to come: I fear I shall eat unworthily, but God hath expressly commanded me to eat. What then? What, shall I resolve to stay away? I am sure that is to sin against a plain command of my Lord, and to neglect that which he hath made my necessary duty. What then shall I do? Why the way is plain, and the solution is easie. I will resolve by Gods grace to do my duty, and endeavour with his help to do it as well as I can: this is the true conclusion from these premisses, and the only safe way to take in this case.

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For if it be a necessary indispensable duty, it must engage our care to do it, and to do it as well as we can; its being necessary must engage our obedience, and care to do it; and the danger of doing it amiss must engage our utmost caution and care to do it as well as our poor power will enable us. The possibility of doing it amiss will not excuse our neglect of it; only it should engage our utmost heed, that we do not contract a guilt, nor incur a danger by any voluntary failing, or wilful carelessness in the doing of it.

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C H A P. V.

*The second Consideration that I named as an Argument for the Truth of our Collection is this, The possibility and guilt of doing this service of our Religion is no greater, than of doing others amiss, which yet we count necessary to be done, and our selves do keep up the exercise of.*

**T**HIS will be a considerable addition to the former, and I shall endeavour to drive it to an issue, by an induction of several dependent propositions.

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I. Men

1. Men are as incident to failures in doing other duties of Religion, as in doing this; every whit as apt to do them amiss, as they are to do this so. I will instance in the two most stationary and common, I mean prayer, and hearing Gods word: we are as subject to failures in these, as we are in this; and if we consider our selves, shall soon confess we are so.

The truth is, the thing is too evident, and others may see it as well as our selves. I am not very willing to enter upon this theme, because I would not indulge to any thing that may but look like reflection; but certainly if any will but observe our common carriage in the Church both at Prayers and Sermon, he will be tempted to think our zeal and devotion is but small, nor our selves very much concerned whether we discharge these duties as we should or no.

Those that so commonly set themselves to gaze, and look upon others, as if they had no other errand hither, but to see how others are dressed, and who is the finest; and those (on the other hand) that lay themselves down to sleep, and perhaps can sooner do it in Gods house than in their own. Surely, both these sorts are far enough from that devotion and zeal, that serious and close application of mind, that all the services of Religion should be performed with, and need not be told how grossly they fail of discharging these services of Religion as they ought.



If I might be allowed to argue from plain evidence, and matter of fact, I think I might cast the odds on this side; and adventure to say that men do not so commonly fail in doing this duty, as they do in others. I never yet saw a man sleep at the Holy Sacrament, or need to be awaked when the Holy Symbols were to be administred to him. Men are then generally serious and thoughtful, earnest and zealous, and closely intent upon what is before them. So that if we may judge by appearance and plain fact, the Service of the Holy Sacrament is performed with fewer failures, than other services of Religion commonly are: but if upon experience we find, that Men fail as commonly in other services of Religion as this, it will serve my turn at present.

Let me beg a Man to consider himself well, and then to give me in the sum of his own experience, whether he do not find himself as incident to failings in other services of Religion as this. How hard a matter doth every man find it, to keep his heart close to God, and his thoughts from rambling abroad, even when he is upon his knees in prayer! who is there so intent, and fervent in spirit, upon whom some vain and wandring thoughts do not break in, even in the time of his most solemn devotion? It is the common complaint of all good men, and I never yet discoursed with the best man of this case, who did not bewail it.

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Or where is the man that so reveres the Word of God, and is so awfully and religiously intent upon the hearing of it, who is not many times diverted by idle thoughts, and vain avocations and fallies of mind? and who sees not, that there are but few, that can hold out *watching with Christ one hour*? I am very confident I shall have experience on my side, and ready to subscribe to this truth, that men are really as incident to failures at other times as this, and find it as hard a matter to pray, or hear Gods word so as they should, and so as to have hopes of divine acceptation in doing of them, as it is to do so in the Holy Sacrament, yea perhaps (as I said before) much harder.

And as I dare appeal to common experience, so I think I can produce some good reasons for the truth of this observation.

For first the aids and assistances of Gods good spirit and grace are as ready for us, and may as reasonably be expected by us, in this service of Religion as any others. So that if we cry out as *S. Paul* did, *who is sufficient for these things?* and declame never so tragically and passionately upon our own utter inability to do any thing that is good; yet we may encourage and comfort our selves with the hopes of the divine grace, that is ready to assist us, and can be sufficient for us, and that in this service of Religion as well as others: or if there be any difference, it may be in this

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it may be more ready, and plentiful than in others: for upon the same reason that S. Paul calls this *a drinking into the same spirit*. 1 Cor. 12. 13. upon the same may men expect more plentiful effusions of that spirit in this, than in other ministries of Religion.

And Secondly, there are the same holy qualifications of mind and temper necessary to the discharging other services of Religion; as to this, the same zeal and fervour of spirit; the same devotion and height of soul; the same sequestering our minds from all other employments and thoughts; the same high thoughts of God and his goodness; the same close attention of mind; the same care to free our selves from all injustice, wrath, uncleanness, and every thing that might render us unfit to converse with our God, and to receive blessings from him. All these things, and the same measures and degrees of them too, are equally necessary for us when we pray, as well as when we Communicate in the Holy Sacrament. You will find the Scriptures still speaking thus; and requiring all these things, as necessary to endear us to God, and to recommend any of our performances to his gracious acceptance. And if so, upon what reason can we suspect more difficulty in the acceptable performance of this service, than in others?

I cannot think of any appearance of a reason, unless it be that all these divine quali-

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cations were more natural and easie in others than in this; or something in them that is more naturally effective of them there than here. Now this is so far from being true, that all good men find the quite contrary to be so; there is no service in Christian Religion that carries our souls higher in raptures of love, and makes them mount in brighter flames of gratitude and praise, than this, nay none like it; when we see our Lord crucified before our eyes, behold and taste the sensible pledges of his bleeding and dying love; it is now that our souls are ready to break their earthly Mansions: 'tis now that our hearts burn within us, and that our thoughts burst into pure flames of devotion and love, which unite us to our God, and render our services as acceptable to him, as the brighter flames of Angels and Seraphims above.

So that if the comparison between this and other services of Religion, be made either upon experience, or reason, this should be accounted the easiest, rather than most difficult of all.

## S E C T. I.

2. **T**HE guilt of failing to do this duty so well as we should, is no greater, than what it is in failing to do others so; and we are not only as incident to failings in doing other services of Religion amiss, as well as this,

this, but we contract as great guilt in them, as in this.

Some men make a mighty stir, and others perplex and puzzle themselves with fears of an extraordinary guilt, if they do not receive the Holy Sacrament, just as they should do; and this guilt they dread much more, and think it to be much more terrible, than the guilt of the like failure in other services of their Religion: but for my part, I could not understand any true reason for this: it happens here (as it usually doth in panick fears) there is no real ground or cause of them, and nothing that I know of, besides words, and a prejudicated opinion, to incline us to think that there is.

It is doubtless a great sin to Communicate *unworthily*, without due respect and reverence, and without care to demean our selves as becomes so sacred a service of our Religion: but so it is also to pray, or to hear Gods word, carelessly and regardlessly; to rush into the divine presence rudely and profanely, and to behave our selves in Gods House as irreverently, and far from any sign of devotion as in our own: to say over a few prayers, without any due regard to the majesty of Him we are praying unto; without any just sense of the importance of the things we are praying for, and without any close intention of mind to what we are doing: to lay our selves down to sleep, when God is speaking

to us, and when a message is delivered unto us out of that divine word, by which we shall be judged at the last day.

I am sure these are sins of a very grand guilt, and I am sure the Holy Scripture always speaks of them as such. I would to God men would soberly consider that they are so, we might then hope to see the publick worship of God performed at another rate, than generally it is. And I add that according to the common language of Scripture, they are sins every whit as big, of as deep a dye, as grand guilt, as Communicating unworthily in the Holy Sacrament is, or can reasonably be thought to be: when any man will undertake to make out the difference upon any sound reason, we may begin to question this: but till then, should not let our own make surmises and fears prevail upon us to the contrary, and fill our minds with unreasonable apprehensions and perplexities in this matter.

It's a bad sign when men are scrupulous only one way: mighty timorous in one thing, but hardy and regardless in another; and it's a shrewd sign it is not true conscience that makes men so mighty shie and fearful of communicating *unworthily*, but never concerned at hearing *unworthily*, or praying *unworthily*; the guilt is really the same in one case, as it is in the other, and therefore equally to be dreaded and avoided in both: and if it be an honest true dread of sin that is upon us,

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it will startle us, and render us afraid of it in one case, as well as in the other.

It's a stale cheat that the Enemy of souls hath too often put upon men, in rendring them mighty tender and scrupulous in some things, but careless altogether in others; as if care in one instance of our duty, would atone our wilful regardlessness in another. *S. James* I am sure tells us another story, *Jam. 2. 10. 11.* where in his judgment, he that wilfully indulgeth himself in the breach of one precept of the Law, is guilty of all, because the same authority of God is contemned in one, that is in another, or in all: for *he that said do not commit adultery, said also do not kill, &c.*

I heartily wish, that men would not put the same fallacy upon themselves: sin and guilt is to be dreaded in one thing, as well as another; and if it be not so by us, if we be scrupulous only one way, but not the other: if we be so very fearful of sinning, in doing of one service of our Religion amiss, and not another; it is too plain, the devil, or our own deceitful hearts put a trick upon us: it is some other reason that governs us, and keeps us from our duty, and not an honest conscience and fear of doing it amiss: for that fear will make us afraid of the same sin in doing other duties amiss, and if it do not, it is not that only which prevails with us.

I would willingly press this Consideration more home upon all mens thoughts, and beg  
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them to take heed of a superstitious fear of greater guilt and danger in doing this service of their Religion amiss, than in others: this is a very dangerous temptation and a snare, and there are two evident ill purposes, that Satan intends to serve by it.

First to keep men in the neglect and disuse of this duty, which besides that it is a very great sin, as being the omission of a necessary indispensable duty; is the neglecting of a thing that is so highly advantageous to all the great purposes of salvation, and consequently so very destructive to that malicious and spiteful design that he hath against all men. I am very confident, there is not any one service in Christian Religion that the Devil hath a greater spite against, and dread of, than the Holy Sacrament; nor any thing that it is more his endeavour, and interest, to prejudice men against, and hinder them from.

Now of all the Stratagems that he can use to this purpose, this is the most specious, and with all men of any honesty the most taking; for to seem fearful of sin and guilt, and very shie of any thing, in which they fear to incur it, is a very specious thing, it looks well, and is certainly in it self a commendable thing, easily embraced, and readily swallowed. Yea and let me add, is as hardly removed when men have once given way to it: when men can appeal to their own minds, and be able to  
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say, that they are afraid of Communicating amiss, and sinning greatly in doing so, and that nothing but this keeps them from the Holy Sacrament; it is a very hard thing to persuade them to it; they think they are on the surer side, and it will not be an easie matter to make them change.

I am the more earnest therefore, in begging men to take heed of entertaining this opinion: it is a dangerous temptation and a snare, and that which this subtil enemy (under the semblance of a friend) puts upon them, on purpose to hinder them from an absolutely necessary, yea and most advantageous duty; by the sin and folly of which he will ruin and destroy them more fatally and successfully, than they would be ruin'd by any sin and guilt in Communicating in the Holy Sacrament, though they did not Communicate so well, and becomingly as they should do.

Endeavour therefore I beseech you, to clear your minds from this superstitious unreasonable fear, that men have so generally in this age; and to which (I wish I could not say) the doctrins of some men have been so contributive. Fortifie your minds with the steddy and assured belief, that there is no more guilt in doing this service amiss, than in doing others so: nor any reason (as I shall endeavour to prove hereafter) to apprehend God more inexorable and severe, or less merciful and ready to pardon our failings in this,  
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than in others. You would find this a great ease and relief to your minds, and that which would enable you to address to this service of Religion, with as much chearfulness and comfort, with as good hope of divine mercy, acceptance, and blessing, as in any others.

But 'till you do endeavor this, and get your minds in some good measure cleared from this dreadful apprehension, you will never attain to any considerable chearfulness and comfort of mind in it: but there will be some trembling and dread upon your spirits, some anxious misgivings and abodings of mind, which will make this service unpleasant, and uneasy to you, and at last go near to cause you to sit down in a total neglect of it.

A second evil design that the Devil hath in this, is to render men careless and negligent in all others; for by causing their zeal and care to be so great about this, he will go near to make it the less in them, and by magnifying the guilt of doing this unworthily, he will cause the guilt of doing others unworthily to grow less.

Men may possibly imagine it will not be thus, but it is almost certain, and ever seen in experience to be so: men shall seldom or never appear so extraordinarily zealous and careful in one thing, but they may be trap'd, and found careless in others: and it may be it would be found upon observation to be so in this very instance; observe it, and you shall find

find abundance of those very men, that seem so over-fearful of sin and guilt in this case, to be very careless of it in others, and easily surmounting the sense and fear of it: and therefore I once more caution men against this opinion, it is of very dangerous effects, and is intended to serve the very worst, and most mischievous designs against them.

S E C T. II.

3. **T**His equal possibility of sin and guilt in doing other services of Religion amiss, is not counted by us a sufficient reason to abstain from the doing of them upon.

That we judge truly in this case, and that this possibility of sin and guilt is not a good reason in it self, appears clearly upon these two reasons among many others. First, that it would discharge a man from all services of Religion. And Secondly, that it is much better to do a duty as well as we can, though not so well as we should, than to disregard and neglect it altogether.

1. If this reason were good, it would discharge a man from all services of Religion, as well as the Holy Sacrament; for there is not any one of these which we are not as apt to fail in doing of, as this; and none in which a failure is not in it self as offensive and provoking to God: both these I have made good already; the one relies upon too true

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experience, and the other upon plain Scripture.

We need but observe our selves, and our own temper, to see how oft we offend, or rather to convince us that we cannot tell how oft we offend and do amiss in our best performances: *in many things we offend all*, saith S. James Chap. 3. 2. and truly in all things we offend some: we cannot discharge any duty of Religion so exactly, and so truly as we ought, but should God be extream and strict to mark our failings, he might most justly reject us, and our best performances too.

Should God deal with us in strict proportions, or by those measures that he did with the Jews of old: should he refuse to accept any sacrifice, in which there were the least imperfection and blemish; it were woe with us: our hearts might justly tremble within us, as oft as we came into his presence, and with the men of *Bethshemesh* might cry out with terror and dread, *who can stand before this holy Lord God!* we should like our guilty protoplast run away from the divine presence, rather than come with any comfort or hope into it, and always be afraid to offer any sacrifice to him.

For the reason is equally true in all; and if it be good in one case, it is so in another; if aptness to do amiss, and danger to incur Gods displeasure thereby, be a good reason to keep men from the Holy Sacrament, it is good

good also to keep them from all other services of their Religion, since they are as apt to transgress, and offend God in them, as in this.

2. This cannot be a good reason, because it is much better and safer to do a duty as well as we can, though we sin in it, by not doing it so well as we should, than wholly to neglect it, and not endeavour to do it at all.

This is so evidently true, that the universal reason of mankind will readily subscribe to the truth of it : it is much better to do a duty as well as we can, than not to essay it at all ; so that should we sin in doing our duty amiss, and provoke God in strictness of justice to punish us ; yet we should sin more heinously, and more grievously provoke him, by wholly neglecting, and disregarding that duty altogether.

You need but consult your own breasts for this ; you would much rather the children or servants, &c. should do what you command them, though they do it imperfectly and amiss, than that they should not go about to do it at all ; and you can much more easily pardon their errors in executing your commands, than endure that they should wholly slight them, and disregard what you give them in charge.

It argues some respect to God, and some sense of a mans obligation and duty, to do what he hath commanded, though he do not do it so well as he should, and perhaps might :  
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but it is next to extremity of profaness to neglect his duty altogether, under a pretence that he cannot do it so well as it ought to be done; and certainly God will bear rather with a bungler in his service, than a neglecter of it; and pardon an honest endeavour, though attended with many failings, much easier than him who never tries, nor endeavours at all.

It is our happiness and comfort, that God hath assured us, he will deal with us by these measures, and accept or reject mens performances by these rules of grace and mercy; for so he hath assured us in the old Testament, that *he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax*: and so the Apostle hath let us know in the New, that if there be *first a willing heart* (an honest endeavour to do as well as a man can) *it shall be accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not*. Now this must needs be a mighty encouragement and comfort to us; and sufficient to let us right in this matter: to make us think it much better and safer to do our duty as well as we can (though we be too sensible that many errors attend our doing it) than to sit down in a total disregard of it.

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## S E C T. III.

4 **O**Ur own confession and practice is evidence also in this case; as we do not count this a good reason to abstain from the services of Religion upon, so we do act contrary to it; whatever errors and failings attend mens holy things, yet generally they keep up the practice of them; the sense of sin or guilt in doing them, seldom prevails upon them to that degree, as to cause them wholly to intermit, and lay aside the care of them.

Those men that are most conscious to themselves of their errors in hearing Gods word, or in praying to him, yet think it their duty to come to Church, and joyn in the publick service of it; esteeming it much better to do something of their duty, than nothing at all; and judge it a lesser guilt to err in the manner of doing their duty, than wholly to neglect all doing of it. I appeal to our common practice: these are the measures that we act, and judge by in all other instances; we do not think we may safely neglect our duty, because we fear we shall do it amiss; nor do we think our selves discharged from the services of Religion, upon a fear of sinning; and offending God in the doing of them.

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S E C T.

## S E C T. VI.

**N**OW from all these premisses the Conclusion methinks should follow very plainly, *viz.* that since this equal sense of danger and guilt in doing other services of our Religion amiss, doth not detain us from doing of them, that therefore it ought not to do it in this.

In the doing other duties and services of Religion, men do so far surmount the fear, and danger of sinning in them, as to keep up the regular and unconstant practice of them; they do not suffer these fears so far to prevail upon them, as to cause them wholly to cast off the care of them; but they judge it much better to do something of their duty, than nothing at all; and a much less degree of guilt to do their duty, though they fail in it, and fall short of that exactness and care that it should be done with; than to sit down in the total omission of it; to live and die in the neglect of it, as I fear a great many of men do in this.

Now in these cases men judge aright, and have both the universal reason of Mankind, and their own minds to acquit them therein, and certainly they do choose the much safer side of the question. I ask then why they should not proceed by the same measures, in our present case? why the same reason that



is so evident to us, and so effectual upon us in all other cases, should not be equally so in this?

I wish men would soberly consider things, and judge righteous judgment, and not make differences where there are really none. I told you before, it's an ill sign when men are scrupulous only on one side, and when that reason which prevails so easily upon them in one case, shall not at all affect them in another; in such a case, it is plain mens wills and passions make the difference, and not their judgments.

And to deal plainly, I am afraid it is just so in our present case; men have no mind to come to the Holy Sacrament, and therefore let every little shadow of a reason keep them from it; it is not because they have any true arguments against it, but because they have no inclination to the thing it self. This I take to be the main reason, why all our reasonings with men in this matter, are so unsuccessful; they encounter prejudices, and contrary passions, which too commonly are obstinate and blind, and men will not be perswaded to quit them, no not when their reasons are convinced, and all their exceptions and arguments satisfied.

It is not in this case only, that men believe with their wills and affections, more than with their judgments; and choose, or refuse things, not as they have true reason and argument for them, but as they have inclinations to, or prejudices against them. The

main fault of mens being more careless to come to the Holy Sacrament, than to other ministries of Religion, lies in their wills, more than real judgment; otherwise the same measures would be observed in both, and the arguments that prevail with them to act regularly in one case, would engage them to do so in this too.

I need not inveigh against this temper, mens own reason (would they but hear it) would make them ashamed of it; at present I only add, that this argument which keeps men from a necessary duty, instead of encouraging them to it, can never be divine or true, nor can it be safe to relie upon it; so that although men were not able to see, or answer the sophistry of it, nor shew wherein the fallshood of it did lie, yet it would be its own confutation; for that argument can never be of God, which perswades men to live in the neglect of a duty, that his commands have made necessary.

And therefore when we come to weigh arguments in this case, we should always incline most to those, which teach us our duty, and encourage us in it, because this is certainly the safer side. Nay, I add further, that were our minds purely pendulous, were there arguments on both sides of the question, that appeared equally true and concluding, so that we were not able to put a difference between them, nor knew which to incline unto:

to; yet this alone were enough to turn the scales. One doth invite and encourage me to do my duty, what I see the plain command of God for, the other doth discourage and fright me from it; and therefore if I were not able to discover by any internal signatures on which side the truth doth lie; yet this external consideration is sufficient to determine my choice: for it is certainly more safe to do my duty as well as I can, than wholly to neglect it; and that argument which encourageth me hereunto, is certainly on the surer and safer side.

And therefore (to conclude this period) since we do proceed by this rule in all other cases, we should proceed by it also in this; since we do not permit the possibility, and fear of doing other duties amiss, to detain us from them, we should not suffer it to keep us from this.

H. 3

C H A P.

## C H A P. VI.

*The third Consideration that I proposed as an argument for this second Collection is this. The Punishment threatned to eating and drinking unworthily, is no greater, than what may be feared upon our doing other services of our Religion amiss, and is threatned thereunto.*

**T**HIS is an argument that ought clearly to be proceeded upon, because it comes up directly to that which some men make the chief exception against coming to the Holy Sacrament, and which they commonly urge this place in defence of; they tell us, they are loth to be damn'd, (and I readily grant they have good reason to be so:) but they are much more unwilling to damn themselves, (and for this they are not to be blamed neither.) Now both these (they say) they are greatly afraid of, if they come to the Holy Sacrament *unworthily*: for damnation is here expressly threatned to him that doth thus, yea, he is said to eat and drink his own damnation.

Now

Now what I have already said before, might go a great way towards taking off this exception; and if Men remember the true notion of eating and drinking unworthily in this place, it would go near to relieve wholly their fear in this thing: for I have shewed, that it is not every failure in receiving the Holy Sacrament, that brings a man within the reach of eating and drinking unworthily, in the sense of this Text: but only that gross and scandalous profanation of it, that the *Corinthians* were guilty of, or something that in true proportion answers to it.

And consequently, that it is not every such failure that brings a man within the danger of that *damnation* that the Apostle speaks of; men need not presently fear being damned upon every error and little failure in doing their duty: they have a more merciful God to deal with, who doth not weigh men by grains and scruples, but rates their services, as he doth their lives, by the general frame and bent of them, and provided that men do their duty, and honestly endeavour to do it as well as they can, hath promised to accept them, though many imperfections stick to them; and such as (should he deal in strict justice) might cause him to reject and abhor them.

In short, it is only that monstrous profanation of the Holy Sacrament which the *Corinthians* were guilty of; that makes a man to eat and drink *unworthily* in the sense of this

Text; and therefore only that, or something as bad, that brings him in danger of that *damnation* which is here threatned; so that unless men be guilty of the same sin, they have no reason to fear the same punishment.

But I shall not put the satisfaction of this scruple only upon this; but consider it in it self; and examin whether there be any thing in it fit to be made an exception against this service; in order to which, I shall endeavour to do these two things.

1. Give the true sense of the phrase, and shew how men mistake in their apprehension of, and deductions from it.

2. I shall shew that if men did not mistake the meaning of it, yet they do not deal justly and fairly in neglecting the Holy Sacrament upon that reason.

### S E C T. I.

**T**HE first thing to be performed to our present purpose is to give the true meaning of this phrase, and there are two expressions which will need explication. First, *Damnation*, and Secondly, *eating and drinking damnation to himself*.

The first word to be explained is *damnation*, a word that makes a dreadful noise, and carries terror in the very sound of it; it indifferently signifies any judgment, or punishment whatever: but it is commonly appropriated, and restrained to signify that terrible punishment

ment in Hell, which God hath prepared for all obstinate, and impenitent sinners.

Now the thing chiefly incumbent upon me, is to shew what the signification of it is in this place; and to inquire whether the circumstances of it do require us to restrain it to this dreadful punishment, as those that make this objection always understand it: for if men mistake in their understanding it thus, then they mistake in their exception too, and the reason of it falls to the ground.

I shall need to do very little more, than repeat what I said in the literal exposition of the Text, to my present purpose: where I shewed,

First that the Greek word *χεῖμα* is of a very general and indefinite signification; and is indifferently used to express any judgment or punishment from God or man; temporal or eternal; upon the body, or the soul, or both; and accordingly is used in Scripture also, sometimes for temporal, sometimes for eternal punishment, for any external chastisement in this world, as well as those eternal ones in the next; it were easie to instance the places in which it is used in both significations, were the thing necessary, or not well known.

From this signification therefore of the word, we cannot infer any thing certain here; it may signifie the one, or it may signifie the other; and from any thing in the bare word, or use of it in Authors sacred or profane, we cannot restrain it to eternal damnation only; be-

because it is used by them to signifie temporary chastisements and punishments as well as that; and therefore as in other like cases, we use to find out the sense of an Author, when he useth words of an indefinite signification, by considering the circumstances of the discourse in that place; so we must do here, fix the sense of this indefinite word *damnation*, by considering the circumstances of the Apostles discourse in this place.

Which if we do, I have shewed secondly, that we shall soon find the Apostle doth not use the word *damnation* here in the terrible dreadful sense of it; nor intend eternal damnation in hell by it: and consequently that men argue amiss, and wide of the Apostles sense, that fix that dreadful meaning upon it. There are two things plain in the context, to warrant me in this assertion. First, that the punishments inflicted for this crime are plainly temporal. And Secondly, that they are said to be inflicted on purpose to prevent this final *damnation*.

First, all the punishments that he instanteth in are plainly temporary; this you may see evidently in the following Verse: *for this cause many are sick, and many are weak among you, and some are fallen asleep.* This sin of yours hath provoked God against you, and he hath inflicted several judgments upon you for it; sundry sorts of diseases (as our Church speaks) rage amongst you, and some are actually cut off by them. Where



Where (you see) there is not a word of eternal damnation in hell; nothing like it, nor any thing that can be interpreted to that meaning; only sicknesses, and diseases, and (at most) death: and that you may not think it means eternal death, or spoken of as a preface to it, as it is to all those that are finally damned; it is expressed by the mild and gentle phrase of *falling asleep*, a phrase that is always used in holy Scripture in a good sense; for the death of good men, and men capable of mercy, and not of those upon whom the *wrath of God abideth*, and whom he will *turn into hell*.

Secondly, all these punishments are spoken of as medicinal; inflicted by way of commutation, and on purpose to prevent this final damnation; this is plain from verse 30, 31. *for if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged, but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world*. The plain meaning of all which is this, you might by judging, and calling your selves to account for this sin, prevent Gods punishing of you with these judgments; and his inflicting of them, though it be just, and justly due to so great a miscarriage, yet it is in his mercy, to bring you to reform this error, and to prevent the being further punished for it.

Where these two things are very plain: First that these punishments were (as almost all the  
divine

divine judgments in this world are) purely medicinal: *i. e.* intended to amend and reform those vices in them that suffered them, and in them that beheld them: they were not wrathful excisions, and revengeful cutting men off in their sins, without all hope of pardon, or space given for repentance and amendment; as God sometimes deals with great and notorious offenders, sore sicknesses, lingering diseases, and great weaknesses, wherein they had time to recollect themselves, and amend their faults, and over and beside had a Preacher sent on purpose to instruct them in these things.

And Secondly, that where the wrath fell heaviest, and the judgment proceeded furthest, even to death it self; yet even there that death was in commutation; and the merciful justice of God satisfied with it, so as to proceed no further in punishing: *we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*

From both which observations, it is plain, that temporal punishments are all that the Apostle instanceth in, or relates unto in this place; and these without any the least reference to eternal *damnation*. Yea these plainly in opposition to it, exchanges for it, and means finally to prevent it.

These things (I think) sufficient to our understanding the meaning of *damnation* in this place; and that it signifies only Gods  
judging

judging men, and punishing of them with some temporary afflictions in this world: so that though the word *damnation* do signifie, and in some places of Scripture intend damnation in the worst and most terrible signification of it; yet it doth neither intend, nor signifie it in this place, and therefore they that so understand it, and argue from it, do both these quite beside the sense and meaning of the Apostle in it.

S E C T. II.

**B**UT there is another expression here that startles some men, and will need explanation; and that is *eating and drinking damnation to himself*: by this some ignorant people think that something extraordinary is certainly signified, and some such meaning intended, as if a man were more accessory to his own damnation, or more immediately damned himself by this miscarriage, than by any other sin.

To *drink damnation* to a mans self sounds harshly, and is a terrible saying; and no man needs be blamed for being unwilling to damn himself. And truly (by the way) I heartily wish every man were so, in all other cases as well as this: but why men should be shie and fearful of damning themselves in this instance and not in others, or why they should think they do it in this, more than others, I understand not.

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In order to the giving satisfaction in this, I shall first explain the phrase: and secondly, shew that it intends not to signifie any greater or more immediate influence upon a mans damnation in this, than in other sins. Thirdly, to which I shall desire may be taken in what I have said before, that no greater guilt is said to be contracted in this, than in many other sins.

1. As for the phrase of *eating and drinking damnation* to a mans self; it is but a common phrase, and intends no more than exposing a mans self to the wrath of God, and making himself obnoxious to divine punishments. I have shewed already what damnation signifies in this place, and what the Apostle refers it unto, *viz.* not eternal damnation in hell, but external, corporal castigations, and afflictions in this world. And then *eating and drinking damnation* can signifie no more, than exposing a mans self to those punishments, and provoking God to inflict them upon him.

So that in the true intendment and reference of it in this place, it doth not respect eternal damnation at all; nor is there any reason (that I know of) to dread it more in this, than other transgressions and sins: The form of speech is but answerable to those well known, and often used phrases in other places of Scripture. *O Israel thou hast destroyed thy self.* And *why will ye die O house of Israel?* &c. in which no more is intended but this,

this, you do by your own follies and faults expose your selves to the wrath of God: you provoke him, yea you even force him to afflict and punish you, who is otherwise merciful and gracious, unwilling and slow to punish the *work of his own hands*.

2. But I add Secondly, so do men do by other failures and miscarriages as well as this; and there is no more immediate or direct influence upon a mans own misery or destruction, in one case than in the other.

It is most certain every mans destruction is of himself, and there are many ways by which men incense God against them, and provoke him to punish them; and amongst those this is one: they do in this miscarriage, as they do in many others, draw down the divine judgments upon themselves; but they do in this, but just what they do in others; and for my part, I know no reason to make any great difference upon.

I know too well that some men who had designs to serve, by scaring men from the Holy Sacrament, have invented terrible phrases, and used frightful ways of speaking in this matter: but I do not know what reason there is for them, nor whether it be worth my stay to examin them.

Those that have so commonly called the Chalice a *cup of poyson*, and compared unworthily drinking the one, to a wilful drinking of the other; I think stand accountable to God  
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for a disparagement and dishonour to the blood of Christ next to blasphemy; and are highly concerned to consider how they can answer it.

Those that talk so dreadfully of mens *stabbing their own souls* in this, and becoming *self-murderers*, &c. use words of fancy, which signify nothing but by a figure; and nothing in this case more than all others, where men heedlessly or wilfully prevaricate their duty, and incense God against them.

And those that tell us, that men do in this *seal their own damnation*, and even covenant with God to be damned, beside that they speak only of their own heads, speak it upon a great mistake of the reason, why the Sacraments are sometimes called Seals by Divines, and by the Holy Scriptures too.

I know Circumcision is once called by *S. Paul a Seal, Rom. 4. 11.* but I do not know, whether this be presently a good warrant, for calling all the Sacraments of the New Testament Seals or not. But if I do allow this Holy Sacrament to be a *Seal*, I must have it remembered that it is a Seal on Gods part, and not on ours, and that Divines mean thus, when they thus speak: God Almighty is pleased to ratifie and confirm the truth of the everlasting Covenant to us, by these Symbols, and Seals of it (if you please to call them so) and in some sense to *Seal* the Truth of his own gracious promises; but I do not so well understand

derstand how they are Seals on our part, or what we can be said to Seal unto, in any other than a metaphorical and borrowed way of speaking.

It is very true, Gods Covenant and the Promises of it are made to us upon the conditions of faith and obedience; and though these are not only supposed in them that come to the Holy Sacrament, and may in some sense be said to be promised and adstipulated unto by them at such times, yet that is but a collateral, and secondary design of the Holy Sacrament: the prime design of it is to confirm our faith in God, and not to Seal our obedience unto him; and the Sacraments are but just such arguments and engagements upon us to become good men, as our faith in the divine promises is, which are all made to us only upon that condition: and he that testifies his belief of those promises, doth oblige himself to that condition, or else he believes like a fool, and upon no reason at all.

But had I not said one word of this matter, I might safely have replied, that whatever men may be said to Seal to in the Holy Sacrament, it is not to their own damnation. Why yes say some, but those that eat unworthily do so: for he that Seals with God for life and salvation, upon the condition of faith and obedience, doth in effect Seal to his own damnation, upon his failing to believe and to obey.

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But I say still this is a great mistake, for the Contract or Covenant is only about salvation, and the incurring damnation no part of it at all, but only by consequence, and by reason of mens failing to make good the conditions thereof: infidelity and disobedience will as certainly forfeit salvation with the Sacrament, as with it; and I do not see that an ill man is in a surer way to damnation after the Sacrament, than he was in before it.

I do not speak thus to lessen the obligation, that receiving the Holy Sacrament lays upon all to lead good lives; nor in the least to insinuate, that breaking our promises then made to God is not a very great sin, and that which must be severely accounted for; but only to extenuate, or take off that dread of coming to the Holy Sacrament, which is brought upon mens spirits, when they hear such terrible things said of it.

But still this is a matter besides our present question; for whatever guilt or damnation a man may contract and incur by failing to perform the promise that he makes to God, and seems to Seal in the Holy Sacrament, it is a thing which respects his failing to live as he should after it; and not his eating and drinking unworthily in it; the guilt is contracted after his receiving the Holy Sacrament, and not at it: and whatever damnation he may incur by his fault afterwards, yet he did not Seal to his own damnation in it.



I might add another consideration pertinent to our present purpose here (but that I have said it already) that there is no reason to dread any such extraordinary guilt in eating and drinking amiss, above what may be justly feared in doing other duties of Religion amiss. But this I have considered, and (I hope) sufficiently made good before; and therefore must refer to that place for it. And only consider two short surmises, that may be entertained against this assertion, and explication of this phrase.

1. That this is really a greater profanation of Christian Religion, than failure in other services of it is; this is counted the most high, sacred, and venerable service in our Religion; and hath always been so esteemed and called in the Christian Church.

I confess it hath: and such a gross profanation of it, as the *Corinthians* were guilty of, is certainly a very heinous sin: but that doth not render every imperfection and failure in Communicating, the greatest sin that may be; or higher presently than men can commit in other services of their Religion.

2. But the Apostle seems plainly to say so, Verse 17. *Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

But whatever that expression may seem to imply, it doth really signifie no more, than the expression in this Text, that I am all this

while considering; it means only this in plain *English*, that such persons are guilty of a great disrespect, and dishonour to the body and blood of Christ, of which the Bread and Wine in the Holy Sacrament are the representatives and Symbols: for a profanation of these reflects upon him whom they represent, and was ever interpreted and thought to do so.

The sense is well expressed in this Text, *not discerning the Lords body*; i.e. not considering what a sacred and venerable thing they represent, and signifie: and therefore using them with as little respect, or religious regard, as men do common bread, and wine in their own houses. This I have shewed the *Corinthians* did, and something worse; and the truth is, the guilt of such a gross profanation cannot well be represented in too terrible a phrase.

So that still for any thing either said in this Text, or that can reasonably be deduced from the phrase of it, my argument stands firm: *viz.* that there is no greater punishment threatned to a failure in this, than may be dreaded upon the like failure in other services of our Religion.

Damnation signifies here only divine judgment, and punishment at large; and there is no reason to restrain it only to that tremendous punishment in hell. Yea, there is that plain in the context which is evidently against that

that sense of it: for when the Apostle had spoken of damnation here, he presently instanceth in temporal afflictions, being *sick and weak and falling asleep*, all which he not only calls being *chastened in this world*, but being chastened that they *should not be condemned with the world*.

And then consonantly to this, the *eating and drinking this damnation to a mans self*, signifieth no more than exposing a mans self, and becoming obnoxious to these punishments, and chastenings of the Lord.

These things (I think) are plain, sufficient to make out the truth of my argument; and in consequence of that to shew how much wide of the Apostles meaning here, those men argue, that talk so dreadfully of everlasting damnation, being eminently due to every failure in mens receiving the Holy Sacrament; and that they stand accountable to God, for a greater sin, and an higher profanation of Religion in this, then they do by their miscarriages in other duties and services of it.

### S E C T. III.

**W**ELL, but because it may yet be objected against the purpose of this argument, that whatever the minute and prime signification be: yet eating and drinking unworthily cannot but be accounted a great sin, highly affrontive to the body and blood of

our Lord, and therefore a high provocation of God, and a fault that he may most justly punish with eternal damnation. Therefore I proceed to the second thing that I proposed on this argument, that whatever the meaning of damnation be in this place, yet men do not deal fairly in urging it against coming to the Holy Sacrament, or staying from it upon that reason.

And this I shall endeavour to make good upon these two reasons amongst others. First, because if it should mean eternal damnation, yet it is not threatned to every degree of eating and drinking unworthily, but only to that gross and monstrous doing this, that the *Corinthians* were guilty of. And Secondly, because this damnation doth not restrain men from other sins, which they must acknowledge to be as damning as this.

1. The first of these I need but just name, because I have insisted upon it largely already: here I shall only add two short Considerations further, relative to this matter.

First, That it is not fair dealing with Scripture, to extend the signification of it beyond the proper intendment and meaning; or to take a liberty of frightening people with the danger of eating and drinking unworthily, upon every failure, when the Apostle used that phrase only in the case of such a prodigious profanation of the Sacrament, as the *Corinthians* were now guilty of. I have already said, their

their miscarriage might well be counted eating and drinking unworthily indeed; but therefore to infer that every failure to eat and drink so reverently, so fitly, and so becomingly as men should, is presently eating and drinking unworthily in proportion to them, is putting our own sense upon Scripture, and judging the things of Religion by our own measures only.

And Secondly I add, that it is unreasonable, as well as uncharitable, to affright men with danger of the same punishment, when they are far enough from the same sin. It is Gods prerogative to apportion punishments unto sins, and not ours: and as much our duty, as it is our interest, to make a difference there, where it is plain the divine mercy doth. It is greatly for our comfort, and the ease of our guilty minds, that we have a God to serve, who transacts with us by the measures of a great mercy, and an infinite goodness; that weighs us not (as I observed before) by grains and scruples, but rates our services and our lives too, by the general frame and bent of them; and provided we be industrious, and honest in the main, and sincerely endeavour to do our best, will accept them, and not be extream and rigorous to mark every thing that is done amiss, or every little imperfection that may attend them.

This is the great comfort and support of our hopes; and to rob us of this, is certainly

a mighty injury and disservice to us: and yet this in their proportion they do, that alarm and frighten men with danger of damnation upon every little failure in this matter, though never so short of that, to which it is only threatned. I have shewed you it is not an easie thing for any Christian to be guilty of this sin, related to in the Text; and I verily believe it: and therefore why they that are really so far from it, yea who tremble at the very thoughts of it, should be so amused and perplexed with apprehensions and fears of the punishments due to it, I know not. I am sure in all other cases men desire we should bend the bough rather the other way, and think themselves severely judged, and hardly dealt with, if we do not: and therefore to teach men to believe, and fear so in this, is *to make them sad whom the Lord hath not made sad*: and to bring an evil report upon the divine goodness, yea justice too.

#### S E C T. IV.

**T**He second thing upon which I charge men with unreasonableness, in urging the danger of damnation in coming to the Holy Sacrament, and pretending to stay from the one upon a fear of the other, is this, because this fear of damnation doth not restrain them from other sins, which they must confess are as damning as this can be. There  
are

are other sins in which men incur the danger of eternal damnation, as really as they can be thought to do, in failing to Communicate so worthily as they should; and yet it is too notorious, that this fear of damnation doth not restrain them from them.

It is a hard saying, but it is too true, those very men that are so very scrupulous, and so very fearful of damnation in this, yet appear openly regardless, and proof against all fear of it in other things, wherein it is as reasonable and necessary to be feared.

There are too many men on one hand, that can live and persist obstinately in plain Schism, allow themselves in rebellions and the most factious courses: opposing government, speaking evil of dignities, pride and uncharitableness; judging and rash censuring of their brethren, fraud and hypocrisie, injustice and knavery, and all sorts of such spiritual vices as these, without the least remorse.

And I would to God I could not say as truly, that there are too many on the other hand, that will allow themselves in open debauchery: make no conscience of raillery and profaness; of intemperance, and uncleanness; of whoredom and drunkenness, and that cursed humour of Swearing, which hath obtained so among us to the shame of the Nation, and for which it mourns.

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There are too many (I say) of both sorts, that live without any apprehension or fear of damnation in these things, who yet when invited to the Holy Sacrament, or reproved for the neglect of it, seem wonderful scrupulous, and fearful of damnation if they should come to it, and think to excuse the neglect of one, with their fears of the other, which they always plead in vindication of it.

Now I appeal to the reason of all men, whether this be fair and honest dealing, or whether it be not plain collusion and subterfuge: were there any true reason to fear damnation here (which yet I have shewed there is not) yet men were not just and fair, in pretending so much fear of it in this, and yet surmounting so easily that fear in others.

I have told you before in this discourse often, and I shall have occasion to tell it you again, that it's a bad sign to see men scrupulous only in some few things; and there is not a plainer mark of an hypocrite, than to be shie and fearful of sin and damnation in some lesser things, but venturous and regardless of it in others, that are perhaps far greater. It was this which our Saviour so often charged upon the Pharisees, and for which he so sharply condemned them as a pack of fulsom errant hypocrites; and men had need to look to it, for they will draw upon themselves the same imputation, if they be of the same temper and practice.

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If the fear of damnation therefore influence you in this one, let it in Gods name do so in other instances that are more gross and obvious. If the fear of damnation in this be true and sincere, it will do this (for damnation is still the same thing, and equally to be dreaded,) but if it do not, it is plain you use it as subterfuge, and artifice: you proclaim your own insincerity and hypocrisie in it; and the excuse it self not only aggravates, but becomes part of the crime.

I have added this Consideration only *ex abundanti*, and to argue with some men even upon their own pretences; and if they will honestly reflect upon it, it will hardly fail of some effect on them: but to others that are really scrupulous and fearful of damnation, upon every failure to receive the Holy Sacrament so well as they should, and argue their fears upon the reason of this Text; to these (I say) the former Consideration will be sufficient, since it is not this eternal damnation that the Apostle means in this place. And let me add, that if eternal damnation be not threatned to the *Corinthians* here, who so shamefully and grossly profaned this holy service, much less is it presently to be feared by those, who receive it as well as they can, though not so well as they should; if so extream gross and scandalous a profanation be not threatned with it; surely every small failure needs not fear it.

CHAP.

## C H A P. VII.

*I advance now to the fourth Consideration, which I proposed for the truth of our present Collection, viz. That whatever sin or guilt there is in eating and drinking unworthily, there is the same, yea there is greater in not eating and drinking at all.*

**T**He truth and reasonableness of this relies upon a reason that I have made good already; and that is, that eating and drinking in the Holy Sacrament is a necessary indispensable duty, tyed immediately upon all Christians by the command of their Lord; and that upon a reason, which will ever have effect upon all those that have any love and respect to him: yea which will still improve, and in every age grow stronger and stronger. I shall not, and I hope I need not resume this argument, because I have discharged it pretty well already; and therefore shall little more than give in the heads of what hath been more fully represented.

1. First, Then I have observed that the command for this duty is as positive and express, as any command for any other duty either

ther is, or can be ; and this we shall be satisfied of, if we look into the story of it's institution. This is related by three Evangelists, and almost in the very same words. *Mat. 16. from 26. to the 29. Vers.* *As they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to the disciples, and said, take eat, this is my body : and he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* The same you have also in the other two Evangelists, *S. Mark Cap. 14. 22, 23, 24. Verses,* and in *S. Luke* also, *Cap. 22. 19, 20. Verses,* in all which places our Lord doth not only Administer this Holy Sacrament himself, but expressly commands them to do so likewise. *Do this in remembrance of me.* This that you have seen me do, do you take care to do also, after that I am gone from you ; in which words it is plain, that our Lord institutes this, and enjoyns it to be a standing service in his Church, and to be observed and practised by all the members of it.

For First, The Apostles were at this time Christs little flock, the first fruits of that Church which he was going to plant in the world, and it is plain in the story, that he administered it to them all.

And Secondly, If we are to respect them here peculiarly as Apostles, whom he designed to be the first and chief Pastors and governors

vernors of the Church: the argument is equally concluding still; for making it their duty to Consecrate, and Administer the Holy Sacrament, he doth make it the duty of others also, to partake of it, and to have it administered to them.

And if we take in part of the Ecclesiastical story to this, Acts the second Chapter at the latter end, we shall see that the Apostles did thus understand this Command of their Lord, and did practise accordingly, as soon as ever they had gathered the face of a Church, for they continued *in breaking of bread*, as well as in prayer; and as constant and daily in one, as in the other.

This must needs be to our great satisfaction in this matter. Our Saviour did institute, and command this service to be in his Church: and his Apostles understood him so, and accordingly did practise it, and keep it up as a standing Service in the Church, as soon as ever they had gathered one; and the members of this Church continued daily in the observance of it, as well as prayer; from all which if any thing can be plain, this is so, that Christ intended the Holy Sacrament to be a constant standing Service in his Church; and that the Apostles and Primitive Christians did accordingly observe, and keep up the practice of it, and this too as carefully and constantly as the publick Prayers. And if this be not enough to evince it to be every Chri-

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Christians duty to observe it, yea to observe it as well as any other publick Service of the Christian Church; nothing is, and nothing can be so.

And since we are engaged again on this Subject, let me add S. Paul's representing of this matter to the same purpose: 1 Cor. 11. 23. 24, 25. *I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks he brake it, and said take eat, this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me: after the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood, this do ye, as often as ye drink it in remembrance of me.*

This S. Paul, and the other Apostles were all that our Lord immediately and by himself consecrated, and appointed Pastors and Governors of his Church: and 'tis well worthy of observation that he gives this in charge equally to both, and takes care that S. Paul should no more go out uninstructed in it, than his own immediate Apostles, but that he should set up the practice of it among the Gentiles, as well as they in the Churches of the Jews: i.e. in plain terms, that all both Jews and Gentiles that should embrace his Religion, should equally practise this, as a standing and constant Service in the Christian Church: and it is certain, that both these Churches did accordingly observe and practise the same.

SECT.

## S E C T. I.

**B**UT then lest it should be thought a temporary transient institution only, which was to continue only while the Apostles lived, or some little time after, as some few other things were. Therefore I observed in the second place, the reason with which this institution of Christ is backed, and what our Lord hath declared to be the great end and purpose of it: now this is expressed in these words, *in remembrance of me, this do in remembrance of me*; which reason doth clearly shew this precept to be no temporary one only, but to be even morally and perpetually obliging.

1. I think I may say *morally*; for the pious, grateful, devout, and joyful remembrance of our Saviour, and of his great love in what he undertook, and underwent for our sakes, is an instance surely of moral justice; and as indispensibly, and everlastingly due from us, as gratitude is to a great benefactor, or any instance of natural Religion is to God: and certainly he that thinks otherwise, dishonours, and disparageth this love, and makes himself for ever unworthy of it. If ever any love were worthy to be remembered; if ever any thing that God did for man deserved, and might in justice challenge our highest gratitude and praise, this certainly doth; and I would

would to God, that some men would remember this, and remember this too, how they can hope for the benefit of it, and yet neglect to remember it, and to remember it by that, which himself hath appointed to be the solemn rite of that commemoration.

2. I said perpetually obliging too; and this I say now, not only upon the former reason, that its end is a moral good; and what is morally good is unalterably and eternally obliging: but I speak it upon a particular respect to the reason of its institution, which is so far from wearing out, that it will improve upon our hands, and grow stronger in every succeeding period of the Church than other: there will always be the same reason to remember the love of our dying Lord; for that love will always appear the same, and the benefits of it will continue the same too; so that the reason of this service will in every age continue the same.

But there is another Consideration which will make it to improve and grow stronger, and stronger; for time is a grand consumer and waster of things: and the memory of the greatest kindness and blessing in a long tract of time is apt to decay, and wear off of mens minds; so that the further that men live off from the time of our Saviours passion, the more danger they are in of forgetting it, and the more need they have of something to fix it the more deeply and indelibly upon their minds.

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So that this reason will still improve, and we therefore that live at this distance of sixteen hundred years from it, had need to be more observant of this institution to refresh our memories, than they that lived but a very few years, or days after it; and so every age that shall succeed us, will have more need still, till the final dissolution, when *the Lord shall come* (as *S. Paul* speaks) when we shall see him, whom we now commemorate, and have all our pious acts of remembering him superseded, by the blissful vision of, and attendance upon him for ever.

## S E C T. II.

**I** Might take in some other Considerations to add to the strength of these, all which combine to render this precept more effectual, and obliging, if it were possible than the former. I will little more than just name some of them.

First, This was the last institution of our dying Lord; and the thing that he gave us in charge, just when he was going to suffer, and die for us.

Secondly, It is the peculiar precept of the Gospel; and that which may be more truly called the command of our Saviour, than any other.

And Thirdly, it is plain, and easie to be obeyed, not in the least chargeable or burthensome,



then some, as some such institutions before were; nor in any measure more difficult than any other service in our Religion is.

But I will not enlarge upon these here, because I have done it formerly in another place; and in truth, I only mention them, and what hath preceded on purpose to make good the ground of my present Argument; to let men see that it must needs be a sin, and to convince them (if it be possible) that it must needs be a very great and heinous sin, too, to live and die (as I fear too many do) in the neglect of such a duty, and total disregard of such a command of Christ Jesus.

I cannot tell what notion some men may have of sin; but I think if any omission, and neglect of men may be called a sin, this may: if sin be (as the Apostle tell us it is) *a transgression of the Law*, then certainly a transgression of such a law must be a sin; and the more arguments there are to enforce this law, and the more reasons to press us to the observation of it; the more heinous and provoking must it certainly be, to live in the constant disregard of it.

Now if these things be so, they must convince us of thus much at least; that whatever the sin and danger of eating unworthily can be, it must needs be acknowledged to be a great sin, and great danger not to eat at all.

But I said something more, and that is that what sin soever eating and drinking unwor-

thily can be thought to be, neglecting and refusing to eat and drink at all must needs be a greater; the reason of this is plain from what hath been said before, for one is only failing to do a duty so well as men should, and ought to do it, but the other is refusing the duty altogether, and chosing rather to live in a total disregard of it. And men that do their duty, though not so well as they should, yet certainly are more excusable, than those that altogether disregard and neglect it.

The universal reason (as I hinted before) of all the world will allow this: every man judgeth by this measure himself, and we are assured that God will do so too: if I am a Tutor, or a Master, or a Parent; I can much easier forgive my Scholar, or Servant, or Child, that out of some regard to my authority, and command, goes about what I bid him, though he do it awkwardly, and far from that exactness that I might expect; than I should if he altogether disregarded my authority, and never took any care at all to do what I commanded him.

And God himself hath told us, that he will rate mens services by the same rules; that if there be a *willing mind* and endeavour to do our best, *he will accept it according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* Wilful designed failures in duty are extremely provoking, I confess, and he that eats and drinks unworthily in that sense, I

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am far from excusing, or extenuating his crime; but failings that are almost unavoidable, the effects of human infirmity and frailty only, or defects only of knowledge and skill, are greatly pitiable, and scarce ever severely reckoned for, by God, or man.

S E C T. III.

**T**Hese premises being now laid, I advance the Conclusion that results from them; that therefore the sin and danger of eating unworthily, can never excuse a man from not eating at all.

1. For first one sin can never excuse for another, and much less can the possibility of sinning become a good reason for actually doing so: apply it to the case before us, and the thing is plain; a man may sin in eating and drinking unworthily, but he certainly doth so in not eating at all; and therefore deserves something a worse character than a fool only, if he can think that the possible danger of the one, can expiate, and atone for the certainty of the other; he doth ill enough that commits one sin, but he that commits another upon the reason of the first, doth much worse.

2. Secondly, It is altogether unreasonable, and unjust to be moved by the fear of sinning in one thing, and yet to surmount the certainty of sinning in another; if sin deserve to

be dreaded and shun'd in one case, it should so in the other too; and if it be not, men deal unequally, are partial in the law, and (as the Apostle speaks in another case) instead of being *doers of the law*, they become unjust *Judges*, and perversers of it.

3. Nay Thirdly, It is plain fraud, and false hypocrisie, to be shie and fearful of that which is certainly a lesser sin, but regardless of that which is greater: this is to *strain at a Gnat, and swallow a Camel*; and with the Pharisees to be scrupulous of every appearance of evil in some things, but to live without all sense and dread of the greatest and grossest sins in others.

The whole world must cry out of fraud and pageantry in such dealings; it cannot be conscience, and honesty that governs men in them; and they had best look to it, that while they think well of themselves, for being tender and fearful of sin in one thing, they be not condemned as gross and wretched Hypocrites, for being without any sense of it in others: this is a consideration, that ought to stick close upon some mens thoughts, who cry out so much of the sin, and danger of *eating and drinking unworthily*, and value themselves for tender conscienced men upon that reason; but all the while live in a total neglect of the Holy Sacrament, never thinking what a grievous sin it must needs be, to live in the neglect of that, which the laws of Christ hath tied

ried upon all Christians, and that upon such a reason as can never fail of having effect upon every honest man.

For shame let us consider better, and shew our selves men, and not like weak men and fools, delude our selves with such silly and fulsome pretences as these: can we think we deal sincerely with God; or our own souls either, in making such a noise with our scruples and fears of sin in doing our duty, but live securely and without all remorse in the great sin of wholly neglecting it? if we can believe this, we may believe any thing that we please: we have more need of physick, than instruction; we may easily be cheated into destruction, nay we supersede all need of that, for we miserably cheat and deceive our selves.

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## C H A P. VIII.

*I add a fifth Consideration to confirm the reasonableness of our second Collection, viz. That this danger of eating and drinking unworthily is caused by our own only default, and is what with competent care we may redress.*

**T**He plain English of what I mean is this, if men be unfit for the Holy Sacrament, or in any danger of Communicating unworthily in it, it is their fault, and it is such a fault as they both should, and may redress; and therefore they cannot reasonably expect to be excused from coming to the Holy Sacrament upon the reason of it; it is not fit to be admitted for a good reason of their staying from the Sacrament at any time, much less for their constant staying from it at all times; it will easily be apprehended how much this consideration will contribute to the Collection we are upon; for nothing can well be more unreasonable than to think that will be a sufficient excuse against doing a duty, which men have contracted by their own only fault, and which with any competent care they may remove.

But

But because this is an argument that may afford some things very pertinent to be observed by men in this case; I shall branch the purport of it into some distinct propositions, which when I have confirm'd, I shall briefly remark the influence that each hath upon the conclusion, that I contend for. I shall comprehend all I purpose to say in these four that follow.

1. That men are in danger of eating and drinking unworthily, is purely and solely their own fault; so that they cannot be excused from eating upon the reason of it.

2. This danger ought to be removed, and care taken to put themselves into better circumstances: otherwise it is wilful and affected, and so instead of excusing their not eating, it will highly aggravate the same.

3. An ordinary competent endeavour and care with Gods grace may remove it; so that upon that reason also, their neglecting of it, becomes highly culpable, and inexcusable.

4. Though men may have been careless, and slipped their opportunity at one time, yet they may and ought to use more care against another; for pretences of continual unfitness, or unworthiness cannot excuse them.

S E C T.

## S E C T. I.

**T**He first proposition is this; this danger of eating and drinking unworthily, in any sense of unworthiness like this in the Text, is purely and solely mens own fault; and therefore they cannot hope to be excused upon the reason of it.

I put the proposition here in the largest sense that can be desired; and do not confine it only to the sense of eating and drinking unworthily intended in this Text. I believe I need not stay proving, that the *Corinthians* fact was a gross, and inexcusable fault, owing to their own ignorance and intemperance: nor that any Christian that should be guilty of the like now, were more inexcusable than they. This will readily be acknowledged by any that considers what hath been said before, *viz.* that all Christians are in such circumstances now, and so fully instructed in the nature and design of this service, that such a profanation of it now would become the most impardonable thing in the world.

But therefore I propose the case more indefinitely, let what men please to think eating and drinking *unworthily* in any proportion to this in the Text, be allowed to be so: yet still I say this is owing purely to their own fault, if it be upon them, and incurred solely by their own carelessness.

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There are ( I confess ) some little imperfections and failings incident to men, which it may be their utmost industry and care (while in this lapsed state) cannot get free from : but these are such as need not come into our present account; for they neither put mens persons out of Gods merciful favour, nor their services out of his gracious acceptance. These shall never be put upon our account but pardoned upon the merits of our dear Saviour, and that general repentance, which God hath promised to accept, in that covenant of mercy and grace, which he hath sealed to us in his blood.

But over and beyond these, whatever we can think brings us into the danger of eating *unworthily*, it is occasioned only by our selves, and our own fault. As for example, let it be the looseness and unholiness of mens lives; their impenitence, uncharitableness, worldly mindedness, intemperance, sensuality, or their being disturbed and *cumbred* with the business and cares of this life, or any other vice whatsoever in proportion to these: yet surely all these are our own guilts, and we have none but our selves to charge them upon.

I know too well how forward men are to excuse their faults, and willing to transfer their guilts upon something beside themselves; but besides that at the great day all mouths will be stopped, and all vicious men become palpably

palpably and inexcusably guilty before God : I say beside this, I never yet saw the man, whom I could not make sensible of his own interest in his crimes, and whose own mind hath not convinced him that he might have done better.

Were our transgressions necessary, and unavoidable, they were not sins : for necessity is subject to no law, and where there is no law, there is no transgression ; and to argue that men cannot but do amiss, is to argue them innocent in doing so ; for what men cannot avoid, they cannot help, and where there is no liberty and choice, there is no more sin, than there is in a stone that falls down, and kills a man.

It will not seem perhaps very pertinent or proper here, to reflect upon the doctrines that have given men any reason or encouragement to think otherwise of their crimes. I look upon them but as so many desperate shifts that men have been put upon to shake off the remorse and anguish of their own accusing minds : the uneasiness of which hath made them willing to charge every thing, yea God himself, rather than endure the torment of their own reflections ; such for instance is the doctrine of absolute, fatal, irresistible decrees in God, by which some men are concluded under an inevitable necessity of sinning : the irresistible inclinations of humane nature to sin ; the insuperableness of those temptations  
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to evil, that are continually urging and solliciting of us.

These are doctrines that are either plain blasphemy against God, or impardonable reflections upon his justice, or the high'st affronts to his grace, in derogating from the sufficiency of it. I am sure God is holy, and cannot tempt any man to sin, much less force and necessitate him to it; and how urging soever the inclinations of nature, or importunate the temptations to sin may be; yet the divine grace is stronger, and sufficient (if men be true to it) to enable them to surmount both: and I appeal to the experiences of men, whether they do not feel their own minds sting, and gird, and convince them they might have done better than they do.

So that after all the endeavors and wrestlings of men in this case; and after all the doctrines that others have propagated to help them in them: men must lay their hands upon their mouth, and take the guilt and shame of their sins upon themselves only; and I think most assuredly, that man would sin grievously, and make the heap of his guilts much greater, that should not confess sincerely, that whatever was amiss with him, or done so by him, was purely and solely his own trespass and fault.

Now if this be so, and whatever danger we can be in of eating unworthily must be cast only upon our selves, and must be acknowledged

ledged our own indiscretion and folly only; then it will undeniably follow that it cannot be a sufficient excuse for not coming to eat in the Holy Sacrament: for I hope men do not think that one fault can excuse, or atone for another; nor imagine that because by one sin they have brought themselves into an unfitness for their duty, that therefore all the duties they neglect, and the subsequent sins they commit in consequence of it, shall be excused: this is to add sin to sin, and to mend one thing amiss, with that which is really much worse.

Thou art in danger of eating unworthily at the Lords Table, if thou come to it; well, but whose fault is it, that thou art so? and what besides thine own folly hath brought thee into that danger? and what now, wouldst thou neglect thy duty, because thou hast made thy self unfit to do it? thou may'st do so, but then know thou hast now a double crime to answer for; one for thy first sin, and another for the neglect of that duty, it indisposed thee for.

Consider what the Apology would be, that in this case thou couldst make to God; and how finely it would sound in thy mouth, to tell the plain truth. I come not O Lord to the Holy Sacrament as thou hast commanded me, but it is because I have unfitted my self for it. I know it is my duty to come, and a great sin to neglect it, but I hope thou wilt  
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pardon me, because I have committed another sin, that causeth it. I came not to thy Table, but it was because I was drunk, or as bad, when I should have come. Be thine own Judge, doth this sound well? would'st thou be pleased thy self with such an excuse as this from a careless Child or Servant? and do'st thou think God will take it from thee? or canst thou hope, that he will pardon thee one sin, because thou didst it in consequence of another? This is so abhorrent to all sense and reason, that (one would think) no man could relie upon it, or could choose but be utterly ashamed of it: nothing can be madder than to commit one sin upon the reason of another, unless it be hoping that the first sin can expiate and excuse the second. So that (to conclude this period) if men stand accountable to God for unfitting themselves for the Holy Sacrament, their neglecting of it can never be excused upon that reason.

## S E C T. II.

**T**He true consequence from that Concession is, what I have remarked in the second proposition, *viz.* that care therefore ought to be taken, to remove this indisposition and danger, and to put our selves into fitter and better circumstances.

We are strangely apt to stand idly lamenting, and whining over our own unfitness

ness and unworthiness, and as apt to think that will become excuse for us before God for it, and atone for the neglect of that duty that we therefore disregard: but can any thing be more idle and unaccountable than this? for still it is our own wilful fault that we are thus unworthy, but it will be our greater fault, if we continue so: the consequence naturally draws the other way, *viz.* that being sensible of our unworthiness, and sorrowful for it (as we seem to be) we speedily endeavour to remove that unworthiness, and in good earnest set about it.

When that great misfortune befell *Israel* before the City of *Ai*, (of which you have the story, *Josh. 7.*) and *Joshua* and the Elders of *Israel* lay lamenting it before God one whole day: you may see how God bespeaks him, *Verse 10. 11, 12, 13. And the Lord said to Joshua, get thee up, wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and taken the accursed thing: they have stolen and dissembled, &c.* therefore they could not stand before their enemies, neither will I be with you any more, unless you destroy the accursed thing from among you. Up, sanctifie the people, and say, sanctifie your selves against to morrow: it was not an acceptable thing to God to hear them howling and lamenting their miscarriage, nor available with him to redress the same: the true and acceptable way was to bestir themselves, set to their own duty,

duty, and clear themselves of that guilt that occasioned their overthrow.

The present supposed case is much like this, but the measures of our proceeding in it, ought to be exactly the same. To set resolutely and vigorously about our duty: about bettering our circumstances, reforming our Lives, and those vices especially that cause this unworthiness, and not stand fruitlessly lamenting and bewailing our unworthiness, with our Arms folded up, without either hope or care to remedy the same: vainly thinking it will become excuse for us with God, for neglecting our duty, which he hath commanded, but we foolishly indisposed our selves for.

Men's duty in this case lies very plain, and they themselves can easily prescribe what ought to be done in all others like it. If our circumstances be dangerous, and we unfit to do our necessary Duty, we need not consult what we should do, we can direct our selves if we please, and think it much better, not to sink under our indisposition, and wear away our selves and time too, in fruitlessly bewailing, of it; but do what we can to help our selves to get rid of our distemper, and to remedy the evil that hangs upon us. For if things be a mis, they ought to be amended. And what evils Men have brought upon themselves by negligence, they should endeavour to remedy by diligence and care.

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Thus the whole World acts in all common cases like this, if a disease amongst them, or a wound or bruise happen to their Bodies, or any Limb of it, they presently consult how to remove the one, and heal the other. And at this rate they act in all other like cases; as soon as they are sensible of an Evil, they endeavour to redress it, and their feeling of it, quickly excites their care against it.

And surely then they ought to so do in this case too, and so much the rather, as the Ir-dispositions of the Soul are more fatal than those of the Body, and what is prejudicial to our Spiritual and Eternal welfare, much more considerable than what affects our temporal only; and I think of all things that affect and endanger that, those are most dangerous, that betray us into Sin, and then hinder us from attending to our necessary duty. If Men therefore have any due regard to the Everlasting happiness of their Souls, and any sense of their Duty, upon their doing which, that happiness doth depend; they will not, they cannot suffer such indispositions to remain upon them, which so much endanger the one, by keeping them from the other.

But I have some things yet to urge further, against our neglect in this case: which will follow as the undeniable consequences of it, and become great aggravations thereof.

1. That Men's unworthiness and unfitness is wilful.

2. That



2. That it is very probable if not certain to increase upon them.

3. That their Sense of it, and sorrow for it can never be sincere, if they endeavour not to redress and remove it:

S E C T. III.

1. **I**F Men that complain of their unfitness, and unworthiness to receive the Holy Sacrament, and urge one as an excuse to the other, do not carefully endeavour to remove that unfitness, and whatever it is that renders them so unworthy; it is plain, that unworthiness is wilful and affected.

He that being Sick seeks not after his cure, or will not use those remedies that are prescribed in order to it, stands responsible for all the pain that he feels, and all the miseries and evils that attend his sickness; and he that being in thralldom endeavours not his enlargement, hugs his chain, and is in love with his Prison. And it is certainly thus in the present case. He that hath made himself unfit to receive the Holy Sacrament, and takes no care to remove that which brings that unfitness upon him whatever it be; stands doubly guilty before God, and his latter error is much worse than the former.

Whatever of Inprudence, or Carelessness, or Temptation, or Surprise there might be in

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the first, there can be nothing but wilfulness and obstinacy in the second; there may possibly be something to extenuate the Guilt of the one; but the other is plainly wilful and presumptuous. Whatever I will not strive to remedy I plainly choose, and it's a plain sign I am reconciled to that which I willingly lie under. If I bore mine Ear; it's a sign I love my Master, and court Slavery; and how much soever I may afterwards regret the consequences of this, or how many inconveniences may insue upon it, yet I am only accountable for them all, and they are really mine own choice, and there is as much of a Man's will in continuing quietly under an evil, as there was at first in choosing of it.

Nay we may go something further yet, and avow this unsuitness upon a Man, to be improved now into artifice and design: Whatever the unsuitness and unworthiness may be in it self, or whatever it was at first, it is now used and cherished, as subterfuge and plea; it rendered him unfit for his Duty at first, and now it shall be improved into argument and excuse against it. I cannot aptlier illustrate this, than by the practice of those Beggars that either make artificial Sores, or cherish and keep open real ones, that they may use them as motives to Charity from others, and indulgences for Idleness in themselves. This (they say) is a common practice among such Persons; and certainly as they

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are the worst of Beggars, that beg under such umbrages, and of all vagrants those most worthy of correction that chuse to be so, rather than work to maintain themselves in an honest calling: so those Men that make improvement of their Sins, and cherish them upon design, and plead them to exempt and excuse from Duty, are of all other Sinners the most fullom, the most abominable and furthest from the Charity and Mercy of God.

Upon which plain reason it must needs appear evident, that unfitness to receive the Holy Sacrament in such a case, can never excuse the neglect of it, but will rather greatly aggravate the Guilt of that neglect; how sufficient a reason soever it might be in it self, for Mens staying from the Sacrament, yet it ought not, and it reasonably cannot be pleaded by them, because they have both voluntarily brought it upon themselves, and refuse to be relieved from it. It is plain artifice and choice, and kept up on purpose to exempt, and excuse them from their Duty.

2. Secondly such a Man's unfitness to receive the Holy Sacrament, will by being neglected, increase still upon him. I suppose Mens unfitness to receive the Holy Sacrament must arise from some Sin, that sticks fast to them, and which they live in. I know nothing but Sin, that unfits any Man for the Holy Sacrament, nor any thing but neglect to repent of it, and reform from it that gives it that effect.

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This I take to be certain, and I make it the Foundation of what I am going to say, on this Argument; for therefore care ought to be taken, to get rid of this Sin, in some competent measure, by repenting of it, and resolving against it, and begging Gods Grace to enable us to do so; for otherwise I ask what a Man can expect or think of? Thou art unfit to receive the Holy Sacrament, by reason of such a Sin, or such a miscarriage: Well, but wouldst thou have this unfitness to continue on thee, or be redress'd?

If thou art resolved still to continue so unfit, by indulging thy Sin, and living in it, and obeying all the motions of it; then I have nothing more to say to thee, but that thou mayest as well cast off all regard to other services of Religion as this. Thy Religion is contradiction and nonsense, and thy Life is open defiance to it. But if thou wouldst have it removed, and become fit for this Holy Service, then the only way to this purpose, is to set thy self vigorously and in earnest about the redressing of it, by care to repent, and reform from it, and not to sit still idly pining, and bewailing of it.

For otherwise, first, thy Indisposition will certainly still continue, and dwell upon thee. No Man can reasonably expect that Sin should pass off of it self, and leave him of its one accord; it sticks too fast, and roots too deep, when it hath once taken hold  
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of us. It is just like weeds in a rank soyl, it is well if our utmost industry and care can keep them down or clear on't. But without that care they will certainly grow, and spread, and in a little time over-run all. And he that finds it too often a very hard matter, with all his industry and care, his watching and praying, and striving to master a Sin, and subdue a vicious inclination, may easily presage the fate of that Man, that sits still under his Sin, and never strives against it, but foolishly expects it should leave him of its own accord.

Nay secondly, such a Man's unworthiness will still increase, and grow upon him. For vice like other things is of a growing nature, and seldom sticks at the same stay; human nature (as I said but now) is a very rank soyl, and vice is a seed too sutable and agreeable to it; and when we consider how subtil and industrious the Devil is to cherish this seed, and cultivate this Ground, we may well conclude to what a monstrous extremity it will in time grow, if great heed and care be not taken against it. So that if Men be in earnest when they plead their unworthiness to receive the Holy Sacrament, and keep from it upon that reason, then the natural consequences of that should be the using all possible and speedy care to get that unworthiness removed, otherwise they must be content, that it continue and grow upon them,

them, and that themselves perish everlastingly under the effects of it.

And then there is a third thing to be considered to this purpose, viz. that among all the arts and methods of redressing our unworthiness, and becoming fit for the Holy Sacrament, the Communicating in it is one of the chiefest; no Man in the World ever became more worthy and fit by staying away from it, but many have become so by going to it. One of the best ways that I know of, for a Man to come to the Holy Sacrament as he should, is to come to it as well as he can. This is that advice that I would give to every timorous Person in this case: if thou fear thou canst not go so well fitted as thou shouldst, be sure to go as well as thou canst; I am very confident, by this means thou wilt still grow better and better: the truth of this hath been attested by the happy experience of many a good Man; and it relies upon very good Reason too. For besides that God is always ready to accept, and cherish *the Day of small things*, and to give more Grace and strength to him, that really and honestly doth his best, according to the present proportions and measures that he hath. I say besides this, this Holy Sacrament is that very means that he hath appointed to confer this Grace upon us in, and the means which we are to use in order to our receiving it from him. So  
that

that if Men want Power and Strength to master their Sins, and to get clear of their present unworthiness; I know no better course for them to take, than to lye at this Bethesda, where Angels attend, and where the Communications of the divine Spirit and Grace are always ready, for them that accept them, and step down into these Holy Waters for them.

3. But there was a third thing that I proposed to consideration here. And that is, that without this care to redress Mens present unworthiness, all their pretences of sorrow and regret for it are plain Hypocrisie and fraud. And this I argue upon these two plain reasons. First, because it shews them to be in love with their disease, to hug their unworthiness, and to cherish it to be excuse and dispensation from duty.

And secondly, not to deal truly with God, and their own Souls, in staying from the Holy Sacrament upon the reason of it; for either they think coming to the Holy Sacrament to be their Duty, and what they have a mind unto, or not; if not, then they may stay away, without alledging their unworthiness, as well as by doing so. But if they be sincere in their acknowledgment, then they should be as fearful to neglect their Duty, as to come unfitly to it; there must necessarily be as great a Sin in that, as there can be in this, yea there must needs be so much

much the greater, by how much it is better to do something of our Duty, than nothing at all, to do it imperfectly, than to disregard and neglect it altogether. It's almost a certain sign of a Hypocrite (as I have often said) to be very shy and fearful of sinning in one case, but regardless and bold in another: and he that is not as fearful of Sin, in staying from the Holy Sacrament, as coming unfitly to it, is fearfull only on one side, and shall never have that pretence accepted, or counted sincere, and therefore (to conclude this period) if Men be unworthy, they should endeavour to become worthy, otherwise they are hypocrites in that pretence, and instead of excusing their not coming to the Holy Sacrament, it shall greatly inhanse and aggravate the Guilt thereof.

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C H A P.

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## C H A P. IX.

*The third thing proposed to Consideration on this head, is this, An ordinary competent endeavour and care (with Gods common grace) may suffice to remove this unworthiness, and put men out of the danger of it.*

**T**His consideration I lay down on purpose to meet with a further exception that Men make in this case, for Men may grant this unworthiness to be their own fault, that care ought to be taken to redress it, and that it were well if it were so; and yet be discouraged from advancing further, because of the great labour and difficulty, which they think is necessary to the redressing of it. Many Men labour under this prejudice, and are frightened and discouraged from fitting themselves for the Holy Sacrament, by the mighty difficulty that they think there is in doing so. There is so much time to be allowed, and so much labour and pains used to this purpose; and some cannot spare so much of their one, and others are loth to be at the trouble of the other, and upon this reason sit still, and are discouraged from  
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ever undertaking or going about it.

Now in order to the satisfying this exception, I propose this consideration, that an ordinary competent care will be sufficient to this purpose; it is no such difficult a matter to render a Man competently fit for the Holy Sacrament, and so to get above the danger of Eating and Drinking *unworthily*, that he seems so fearful of.

In the managing of this Argument, I shall proceed in this following method. First, I shall premise a consideration to prevent all prejudice or mistake in what I am going to say. Secondly, I shall consider what the Apostle prescribes to these *Corinthians* in this place, by way of remedy against Eating and Drinking unworthily. Thirdly, Examine it upon the reason of the thing, consider what is necessary to Eating and Drinking worthily, and what time or labour is sufficient by way of preparation thereto.

## S E C T. I.

**T**He Consideration I would premise is this, that I am not going to lessen any Man's esteem of the Sacredness of this Service, or his care to prepare and fit himself for it as well as he can.

I said in the beginning of this discourse, how very apt Men are to run out of one extremity into another; and how hard it is to reform

form one error of Men, so as that they shall not fall into the extremity on the other side; and I observe that Men are very incident to the same error in this matter; it's a hard matter so to speak against Men's being too scrupulous, as that they shall not take occasion thence to become careless, and so to reform the error of thinking every preparation for the Holy Sacrament too little, as not to give them some encouragement to think, that any preparation at all is enough.

My business at this time is against the first of these Errors, upon which Men are, or appear to be mighty scrupulous, and fearful of coming to the Holy Sacrament, even to superstition, upon an opinion that so very great and exact preparation is necessary to fit Men for it, and that upon no less a danger than *Damnation*. So that they are really frightened from any thoughts of coming to it. The danger of coming unprepared is so amasing and frightful, and the pains and labour of preparing a Man's self so very great, that they choose to stay away, rather than incur so great a danger, or take so very much pains to avoid it.

This (I say) is the great Error that I am now to reform, and therefore have need to caution the Men I speak to, and desire them to consider, that while I endeavour to cure this superstitious fear and dread on one hand,  
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I do not encourage them to run into carelessness and presumption on the other, or from thinking that no preparation is enough, imagining that any though never so slight is sufficient. I would not encourage any Man in his superstition, but I would as little encourage his negligence and profaness. I would not willingly scare Men from their duty, by telling them stories of the difficulty of doing it, and the danger of not doing it aright, but I would be as loth to discharge their care from doing it as exactly and well as they can.

There are some pious and tender Persons in the World, that think they ought to set apart so much time, and use such a method of preparation for the Holy Sacrament, and constantly do it. And for my part, supposing them to live in such circumstances, that they can easily spare so much time, without intrenching upon other necessary Duties, and without rendering Religion tedious and a burthen to them; I discourage them not: they do well, and in Gods Name let them go on. Some time is absolutely necessary for the great affairs of Mens Souls, to set all things (so far as they can) to rights, between them and God; and no time can be more opportune, and proper for such a care, than when they are going to the Holy Sacrament, and to partake in the greatest manifestations, and pledges of God's dearest love to  
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Sinners, in giving his own Son to Dye for them.

But now I would neither have these Persons to impose this their practice upon all others, nor those others to think presently, that such things are absolutely necessary, and that unless they come up to them, they ought to stay from the Holy Sacrament, as being utterly unworthy, and unfit for it.

For I consider that the Primitive Christians received the Holy Sacrament every Day, and in times of Persecution twice every Day, as seems very probable from some passages in Antiquity; and I can easily consider, and satisfy my self, that therefore these Persons did not, yea could not set aside so much time, and be so curious in their preparation every time that they received it.

The plain truth is, they accounted the Holy Sacrament to be as necessary, and standing a part of their Daily Devotions, as their Prayers, or any other publick service of their Religion; and as in truth no greater preparation is necessary for one, than for the other, so it is plain, they thought there was not, but went to it as constantly and with just the same devotion, as they went to their Prayers; they thought a Christian good Life, an habitual preparation for the Holy Sacrament, and a Pious Devotion of Spirit the best way of Receiving it. And I am very sure they thought right in this matter, and as we ought to think too.

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Would Men endeavour really to approve themselves good Men, by leading regular good Christian Lives (as they did, and as those Persons that seem so scrupulous and fearful pretend to do) a very little time, an ordinary endeavour and care would suffice to render them fit for the Holy Sacrament. Holiness (as I said but now) is the best preparation for this service, a good life is an habitual preparation, and Christian devotion and reverence with it is always an actual one, and with these two no Man can be unfit to Communicate in it: for what those good Men did, we may do also, would we endeavour to imitate, and come up to them in their life, we need fear offending God in this service, no more than they did; it is a very little matter that will fit a good Man for the Holy Sacrament, and it is not a little thing that can cause him to receive it unworthily.

But still I speak not this, to supersede or lessen any Man's care to fit himself for this service, as well as his time, and skill, and care will give him leave; the better and more exactly that any Man is fitted for it, the better it is for him: and he can never be too well prepared. And therefore I enter this caution, that no Man think the contrary of me, from any thing that I am going to say on this Argument. I am concerned to encounter the contrary extreme, and therefore  
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while I go to shew, that with an ordinary care, a Man may render himself fit to communicate, I desire that no Man do presently think, that he may be fit, without any endeavor or care at all.

S E C T. II.

**A**Nd now having premised this, which I must beg Men's remembring of as we go along, I proceed directly to make good the assertion. viz. That it is no such mighty difficult a matter, to render a Man's self fit for the Holy Sacrament, and so to remove, and get above the unworthiness that he seems so afraid of, which I have proposed to do by three plain arguments.

The first is by considering what the Apostle here prescribes to these *Corinthians*, to remedy and prevent that their Eating and Drinking *unworthily* which he blames them for. It is not easie to imagine any Men more unfit to receive the Holy Sacrament than they were, or to receive it more unworthily than they did. And therefore the same measures that he observed with them, will be proper for us also, in our present case, and what was thought sufficient by him to redress this unworthiness in them, may be sufficient for us to the same purpose.

Now all that he saith to this purpose, is contained in v. 28. and 31. *Let a Man ex-*

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*amine*

*amine himself, and so let him Eat of that Bread, and Drink of that Cup. And if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged of the Lord.* This is all that he prescribes in this case: for what he saith in v. 33. and 34. doth concern the manner of Eating in their love-feasts, and not in the Sacrament, as is plain to any that reads them. So that in order to our satisfaction in this matter, we shall need only to consider what the sum and import of those two Verses are.

I begin with the latter, both because it is the sooner dispatched, and because I do not well know whether it so truly intend any thing to be done by them in order to fitting themselves to receive *worthily*, or rather prescribe the way of expiating, and attoning for the Guilt of their having Eaten and Drank *unworthily*; but if it do imply something of this nature, then the meaning of it is only this: Let us judg our selves for our errors, and failings, that we may anticipate and prevent God's Judging of us. Now in this sence it respects and injoyns only the matter of Christian repentance, by which we reconcile our selves to God, assoil our selves of our Sins, and so become fit to receive the pledges of Divine Grace and pardon offered to us in that Holy Sacrament.

But I put this but only upon supposition, and that I might not be thought to conceal any thing, that can be supposed to be prescribed



scribed by the Apostle to this purpose; for I am apt to believe, that this (as I said before) doth not so much respect any thing to be done by way of preparation to the Holy Sacrament, but rather to be added by way of advice, how to atone for the Sin of having Eaten and Drank unworthily; and to prevent those punishments, that they might expect and fear upon having done so. The Apostle had convinced them of their Sin in this, and let them know that the judgments which they lay under, were the effects of that Sin, and having told them in *verse 28.* how to reform and prevent the Sin for the future, he tells them in this how to escape the punishments that were due to it: *viz.* by anticipating God's judging of them, becoming Assessors upon themselves, and by their own remorse and sorrow inflicting that punishment upon themselves, which otherwise they might expect from God; this I think is the truest account of this passage, and of what the Apostle means in it.

So that the great matter of preparation, that he prescribes in order to their Eating and Drinking fitly, and becomingly, i. e. *worthily* in the sense of that word, is comprehended under that examination that he adviseth to *verse 28.* *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him Eat of that Bread, and Drink of that Cup.* And therefore this is the great thing to be explained, by which we may see what

a reasonable measure of consideration and care the Apostle thinks sufficient to this purpose.

I do very well know, and as readily acknowledge, that some considerable Men understand this so, as to comprehend all that strict and critical examination of a Man's self, that may be needful to the understanding exactly the state of his Soul, with respect to his Religion, Faith, Charity, &c. i. e. whether Men be Christians indeed or not, and whether they resolve to continue so, whether they have truly repented them of all their Sins, both in general, and particularly, and whether their purposes of reforming from them be real and sincere.

Yet I think I have reason to differ from them a little in this: for whatever may be the meaning of the Greek word *δοκιμαζέτω* in other places of the New Testament, yet I think it is not the meaning of it in this; and by considering wherein the error and guilt of these *Corinthians* consisted, we may pretty well understand the meaning of what he prescribes in remedy of it.

This I have considered at large already in this discourse, and the truth is the Apostle expresseth it plainly enough, to be *not discerning the Lords Body*. i. e. putting no difference between this and common bread, and therefore Eating with as little Reverence at the Lords Table, as they did at their own, in their own Houses.

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This was the Sin, and by considering that it was so we may easily collect the meaning of that examination which he prescribes against it, to be primarily no more than this (which I shall borrow the words of a great Man among us, to express) *let every Man among you consider well with himself, what a Sacred action that is, which he is going about, and what a devout and reverent behaviour becomes him, that is going to Celebrate the Holy Sacrament, which Christ hath instituted to represent and commemorate his own Body and Blood, broken and spilt upon the Cross for Man's Redemption.*

This is what the Apostle prescribes as a remedy against that profanation of the Holy Sacrament that they were guilty of, and what he thinks sufficient to preserve them from it, for the future; to consider well what a high mysterious service of Christian Religion it is, that the Bread and Wine are therein consecrated into the symbols of our Lord's own Body and Blood; that they are no longer common Bread and Wine, but changed into a great mystery, and in a Sacramental sense the very Body and Blood of Christ.

This is *discerning the Lord's Body*, and this is the import of a Man's examining himself that he may discern it; and he that doth this, can never be guilty of such unworthy eating and drinking as these *Corinthians* were guilty of; for he will see clearly what a mighty respect and deference is due to this service, and

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what a profound veneration and reverence becomes those that eat at the Table of the great God, and are admitted to a participation of his own Son's most Sacred Body and Blood: upon this reason Antiquity used to call these *τὰ ἁγία μυστήρια*, the most Sacred and dreadful mysteries; and no Man that considers them as such, but must put a difference between them, and common food, and can hardly but partake of with a Sacred dread of Spirit, and a most profound reverence and devotion. I only add what I undertook this notion for; *viz.* That this self examination is therefore no such difficult thing as Men imagin it to be: it is what all Christians know, what they can easily consider, and what it is indeed the greater difficulty for them not to consider, and be affected withal.

But then suppose that it did imply something more, and what some Men (as I hinted before) do extend it unto, i. e. all that examination of a Man's self, that is necessary to the true understanding the state and condition of his Soul; with respect to his Repentance, Faith, Charity, and the quality of his life. First, I say, I will by no means discourage any one from care of this, and setting apart some time for it, in order to his eating and drinking becomingly at the Lords Table. This is a thing upon many accounts very expedient and fit, and especially in order to our understanding with

with what qualification we ought chiefly to come to this Holy Sacrament, which may, and ought to vary according to the variable circumstances of our Spiritual condition.

Besides this examination of a Man's self is a thing highly necessary to the great purposes of Religion, and because no time can well be pitched upon for it, more fit and proper than when Men are preparing themselves for the Holy Sacrament; therefore it may be very prudent to take that time to do it in: some time is necessary for it, and that time may be as fit for it as any other; and those that will so imploy it, do well, and are by no means to be discouraged.

But then Secondly, I say, this examination is but just necessary then as it is at other times, for I see not, why it may not be thought as necessary to examine our selves, and consider what the state of our Soul is, when we go to pray, and when we go to hear God's word, that we may both know what especially to pray for, and how to apply that word to our selves, as it is when we are addressing to the Holy Sacrament. So that whatever it signifies, it is no more necessary to the Holy Sacrament, than it is to other services of Religion, nor ought to fright us from the one, any more than it doth from the other.

And Thirdly, I add, that surely there is no

such mighty difficulty in it in this sense, nor any such long time necessary to the performance of it. Every Man doth know, or at least easily may know his one temper; and what the general bent and course of his life is, what he loves and what he hates, and whether Religion be the matter of his care or not; a Man can no more be ignorant of his one temper, if he will consider, than he can fly from himself, nor can any great Sins or wickednesses which require a particular repentance, scape his notice, any more than the visible actions of every day: and how then can any Man be a stranger to, or need any tedious difficult inquiry and search, to know those things, which he daily feels, and is sensible of?

I do not at all doubt but that some wicked Men use arts to divert their minds and thoughts, from any reflection upon their spiritual condition, and study to live strangers to themselves; but I am sure there is real difficulty in this, and perhaps after all such endeavours, their minds will sometimes emerge above their pressures, break loose from these sensual restraints, and force them to understand their condition whether they will or no; it is natural for a Man to understand himself, and to reflect upon his own actions, and much more easie than to arrive to such a pitch of brutish carelessness, insensibleness, and inconsideration, as to be perfectly a stranger to his

his one state; it is not in this case as it is with a Merchant, who may run on, and undo himself, before ever he know how his accounts stand; for his Books lie out of his sight, or he may be careless, and neglect to look into them, but in this case a Mans Books are always open, always present and under his view, and he must wilfully shut his eyes, or look upon them, and suspend the natural, and even necessary exertions of his mind, not to think of them.

So that whatever *examining a Mans self* can signifie, it can be no very difficult thing, nor require much time for the performance of it. No wise Man lives without it, and no Man of the most ordinary observation and reason can be such a stranger to his own affairs, as to need much time, or pains in the examination of them.

The great things of our Souls, and what relate to the condition of them, are always obvious and plain, and there is no great difficulty (that I know of) relating to this matter, but only to bring our minds to pronounce, and judg honestly, and impartially of them. In this I must needs confess there is some difficulty, for self-love is prevalent in all Men, and they are not very willing to condemn themselves; of all things in the world, the falling under the reproach and censure of a Man's own mind is the most irksom, and therefore Men study arts, and all possible

possible ways to avoid it ; and in this it is, that the deceitfulness of a Mans own heart doth chiefly, if not solely consist.

But still this difficulty ariseth not from the difficulty of knowing, or examining our own state, but from the difficulty of being honest, and just in judging of it ; the case is always open, and plain : but the fault lies in partiality to it, and in bribing a false opinion, and judgment of it.

### S E C T. III.

**A**Nd now having considered what it is the Apostle prescribes in this case, and seen what this examination of a Man's self doth signifie, and what little expence either of time or labour is needful for it ; I proceed to the second thing, i. e. to examin the reason of the thing, to consider what is necessary to eating and drinking becomingly ( i. e. worthily ) in the Holy Sacrament, and what that preparation is, that is needful in order thereto.

As for the first, what qualifications are necessary to our communicating fitly and becomingly in the Holy Sacrament, I mean with what tempers we ought to come, and how to behave our selves there when we are come ; for these I think we need look no further, than the exhortations of our Church in the Office for the Communion ; they are in  
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our Common Prayer Books, and I wish every one would often read, and consider them, they most plainly and fully instruct us in these things. I shall reduce them to these four heads.

1. Repentance, as it includes a hearty sorrow for our sins, an humble confession of their guilt to Almighty God, and a resolution by the help of his grace, to reform for the future from them.

2. A steadfast humble faith in God's mercy, through Jesus Christ for our pardon, and acceptance.

3. A grateful sense of God's mighty love to Mankind, in sending his Son to die for us, with a thankful remembrance of his death.

4. Love and Charity to all Men, forgiving those that have offended and injured us, being reconciled (or endeavoring to be so) to all that we have offended; and bearing love, and good will to all, so as to be ready and willing to do them good according to our power.

These contain the sum of all those qualifications, with which we should come to the Holy Sacrament. Now as these things are absolutely necessary to our being Christians, and therefore necessary for us to regard, and take care of at all times, so there is no more difficulty in them, to fright us from the Holy Sacrament, than from other services of our Religion. If the difficulty of them be

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an exception against the Sacrament, it is so against Christian Religion in general, and we may throw off wholly the one, as well as the other, upon the reason of it; but as there is no great difficulty at all in them, nor any reason to accuse Christian Religion, as a heavy yoke in requiring of them, no more is there any cause to make them an exception against coming to the Holy Sacrament: these are the conditions of our being Christians, and with the help of the divine grace they are possible and easie too, and as easie in order to this service, as to any other purpose.

And then if we inquire how we ought to behave our selves at the Sacrament, the same exhortations will direct us in that also, which we may reduce to four heads, as we did the former.

1. A most profound reverence and humility; such as becomes creatures, when they approach the immediate presence of the great Creator, when they ingage into the most solemn and mysterious service of their Religion, when they dolefully reflect upon their own unworthiness and demerits, and when they humbly supplicate, and beg for the pardon thereof, and which most certainly becomes all Christians, when they are set in the most affecting prospect of the death and passion of their Lord and Saviour.

2. A most affecting exalted joy, and rejoicing in Gods mercy and our Saviours love to us, *who*  
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both remembred us in our low estate, given us such reason to hope for his favor and pardon; and in this Holy Sacrament, lets us feed upon the sensible pledges of this love, and visibly seals unto us the assurance of the same.

3. The most devout and raised affection, the most hearty and exalted praise to God, for all this; the magnifying the astonishing love of our God; and rendring the most devout praise to our dear Saviour for this miracle of his kindness to us.

4. Earnest prayer to God, to accept our present poor service, and mean return for this mighty favour, and to enable us by his grace to live for the future, in some competent measure suitable to these mighty obligations.

The four former qualifications render us fit to *partake of those Holy mysteries*; and these other make us actually to do so, and I pray you but to recollect them, and then tell me what great difficulty there is in them: the truth is, they are all so natural to Men at such a time, that I should think the great and only difficulty were, so to resist our present impressions, as not to be affected into them. Who that considers what he is then doing, and what benefit and honor he is receiving from the great God, can be otherwise than devout and humble? whose heart can choose but burn with love unto God and Christ, and flame out into the most hearty adorations and praise to them, when he commemorates

morates this amazing instance of their love? and who can be affected thus and not break out into most sincere and earnest prayer to God for his grace, to enable him to live in some measure answerable to the same?

I appeal to the experiences of all pious Communicants, whether there be difficulty in these things; or rather whether they feel not such a mighty strong energy, and power upon their spirits at such a time, as causeth them readily to break out into them. How naturally do tears of sorrow and joy flow from our eyes! how do our Souls lick the dust in humble prostrations! how are we swallowed up with rapturous contemplations of our Lords love! and what bright flames of praise and love ascend from our exalted Souls at such a time! So that we are for the present even all wonder and all love, and tast what the joys of the spirit, and the enravishing sweetnesses of Religion mean; the Holy Spirit, and the divine grace do so strongly seise and pervade our spirits then, that these things become natural and easie, and Men must offer a certain violence to themselves, and unreasonably resist the strong motions of Gods grace and Holy Spirit, or they cannot neglect, or fail of them.

And then as to the second sort of things that I mentioned, what are the best, and most effectual means and methods to be used in order to these preparations, and attainments,

I think I may reduce all the voluminous prescriptions and advices of Men, and the many Books that have been written to this purpose, to these three plain heads.

1. To consider seriously and truly what our spiritual condition is, that we may know what manner of preparation either of repentance and sorrow, of faith and hope, of love and joy, we are especially concerned to make and come with; for though all these ought still to be conjoyned, and are necessary and becoming every Communicant; yet some seem more peculiarly necessary and proper for some, than for others, according (as I said before) as their circumstances, and conditions chiefly are. Repentance is not improper for the best Men living: but it is more absolutely necessary for them, who have great sins to answer, and beg pardon for; love and joy and praise become bad Men, and are mighty due, for the hopes of mercy and pardon that God hath given them: but they are more becoming and just from those good Men, who live in the blessed sense and fruition of this love, and goodness to them, and there receive the actual pledges, and assurances of it.

So that though all these be fitting and proper, yet some are more so than others, according as Mens conditions are better or worse, and by seriously considering how our Spiritual circumstances stand, we shall easily know, what preparation is most proper for

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us to make, and what tempers of mind chiefly to come with.

2. Sober and solemn meditation, upon the great things of Religion, especially upon this mystery of our redemption by the sufferings and death of the Son of God, by which we shall affect our Souls with a deep sense of our own unworthiness, and vileness, of the evil and danger of sin, and of the immense and astonishing love of God and Christ to us.

3. Humble and devout prayer to God, to assist us, and help us in these Preparations, and addresses; for besides that prayer in it self hath a strange efficacy and power to effect in us all these excellent dispositions and tempers, it is the most certain way to receive those assistances from God, that will help us to the attainment of them; for these are offered freely to all, and are always ready for those that will ask them, that will accept them, and that will be true to them. *For every one that asketh receiveth, and every one shall find that seeketh, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

And then (to conclude this period ) if there were any difficulty in these preparations, considering our own single unassisted strength; yet considering how we are backed, and may be assisted with this almighty grace and spirit of God, there can, and there ought to be nothing of difficulty imagined or feared to be in them.

SECT.

## S E C T. IV.

**B**Ut because I have a mind to clear this point to the utmost, I shall consider this matter of preparation yet more distinctly, both with respect to a good Man, and to one that hath too much reason to doubt himself, or conclude that he is evil, and under the power of sin; shew what preparation is necessary for each of these, and that a reasonable portion of time and care will easily dispatch it.

I. And first for a good Mans preparing of himself for the Holy Sacrament, a very little matter will dispatch it. Holiness (as I hinted before) is a constant habitual preparation, for this, or any other Service of Religion, & a good Man hardly will be at any time unfit for it.

Those Virgins that have Oyl continually in their Lamps, and those Lamps constantly burning too, can quickly awake, and soon trim them for the Bridegroom's coming, and he whose heart keeps a vestal fire of love alwayes alive, can easily fan it up into an actual flame, and make it fit either for sacrifice, or incense. Such a Man's Soul is always well inclined, and stands continually the right way; so that when an opportunity of actual devotion offers it self, he readily closeth with it, and God no sooner calls upon him to seek his face, but his heart eccho's to the call, and readily answers with the devout Psalmist, *Thy face Lord will I seek:* N When

When we have said all that we can on this subject, a good life is the best preparation for the Holy Sacrament, and he that lives such a life can never be unfit for it, he is always habitually fitted, and whatever curious dress he should at any time be in, his constant pious and devout temper will easily be improved and heightened into it. He that hath a Wedding Garment always ready, and clean kept, can easily put it on, and he whose loyns are always girded, and Lamp burning may be sooner ready to wait upon his Lord, whenever he calls.

Or if we should suppose the worst of such a Man, and that he should through the violence, or surprise of a temptation have let down his Watch, and indisposed himself, yet a little matter will recover, and set him to right again; a light that is newly extinguished may soon be kindled again, and an habitual goodness though it have been disordered, will easily recover its temper; a little matter will dispatch the business of a good Mans repentance, and no great labour is needful to wash off that spot, that is the stain of a Child, and that some external accident hath cast upon the outside only.

2. But the more material thing, is to consider the case of a wicked Man, who upon examining his condition finds too much reason to conclude ill of himself, and to state that preparation that is necessary for him to make in order to this service. For



For first I do not think this Man unconcerned in it, but as much obliged to come to the Holy Sacrament as another, if not rather more; the command for the observation of it is general, and no Christian is excepted, or dispensed with; our Lord administred it to all his disciples, to Judas as well as St. Peter; St. Paul when he comes to give directions about the same matter, excepts none but rather includes all, he commands indeed every one to examin himself, but having done so, then to eat and drink: yea he commands those *Corinthians* to do this, that of all Men (one would think) were the unfittest to do it.

And upon the whole matter, there is so little reason to keep such a Man from the Holy Sacrament, because he is in an ill condition, that there is therefore the greater need why he should come; it is very ill arguing as some do, I fear my condition is bad, therefore I must stay away, the true reasoning holds just the other way. My condition is bad, why therefore come that it may be made better; there is but own thing to be supposed to the truth and safety of this arguing, i. e. that such a Man desires his condition should be amended; if he resolve to continue wicked, then he may stay away, but so he may from all other services of Religion too; for such a Man's Religion is all contradiction and nonsense, and he may throw off all care of it, as well as neglect the Holy Sacrament.

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But this case I have argued before, and need determin no more upon it now, I only add one observation more at present, and that is, that the great and main qualification that the Church requires in them, who come to the Holy Sacrament, is repentance, and the greatest part of the service she appoints in order to it, consists in humble confessions, in sad and passionate deprecations of the divine wrath, and most earnest imploring Gods pardon, all which is to me a plain argument, that she thinks no Man unfit to come to the Holy Sacrament, that doth repent of his former sins, how great soever they may have been, and that doth desire, and resolve with Gods help to lead a better life for the future.

I am sure no Man hath more need to come, than such a Man, nor is any Ministry in Religion more proper for him to apply to; which is so peculiarly fitted to his needs, so efficacious to fasten his pious purposes, and instituted on purpose to be a means of conferring that divine grace, which is necessary to enable him to live up to them.

I know the Church in some cases adviseth some to stay away, and commissions her Priests, to suspend, and keep away others: but the first are only those, whose consciences are yet perplexed, and troubled for some grievous sin; and the second are such as living notoriously in gross sins, are become a publick scandal unto others; but neither of these are either to keep

keep off themselves, or be kept off by others, but only till the one by repentance, prayer, and consulting their spiritual guides, get their consciences relieved and eased, and the other by some publick testimony of repentance reconcile themselves to the Church, and give some hopes of their amendment; so that repentance, and promises of amendment is thought by the Church sufficient to qualifie even bad Men for the Holy Sacrament.

This then being cleared, we may proceed readily in the second place to consider that preparation which is necessary for such a Man, and inquire whether any such long time, or mighty labour be necessary for it; and what hath been said just now, will be of use to us in this inquiry, for repentance is the great thing that such a Man hath to regard, *viz.* with sorrow and grief to confess his sins to almighty God, to implore and beg his mercy for the pardon of them, and his grace to enable him to reform from them.

To this there is nothing necessary to be added, but faith, as it implies a great and grateful sense of Gods mercy, in sending Christ to die for us, and giving repentant sinners such hope of pardon and salvation in him, and upon his merits; and as it implies hope too of the same mercy and pardon to us, upon our repentance, together with an humble and steady reliance upon Gods grace, to

enable us to repent and reform.

These things comprehend the sum of that preparation that is necessary for the worst Men to make for the Holy Sacrament, and I pray consider, what great difficulty there is in these, or whether any such great deal of time be necessary for them, that Men should except against coming to the Holy Sacrament upon that reason; if Men make them an exception against this service, they may as well make them an exception against Christian Religion in general, for they are the great and necessary postulata's of Christianity, and the only reasons upon which it promiseth salvation to any; and therefore are no further any exceptions against the Holy Sacrament than they are against our whole Religion, and upon the same reason that we abstain from it because of them, we may renounce our Baptism, and the name of Christ by which we are called.

If Men charge the Holy Sacrament to be severe, and a hard service because it requires these preparations, we may charge our Religion as well to be unreasonable and hard, for they are made necessary by the one, as well as required in order to the other. So that if it be difficult to communicate because they are required, it is difficult to be a Christian upon the same reason, and as because we count them necessary to Salvation, we surmount all the objections and pleas of their be-

being difficult or hard, so we ought to do in this case also, especially since we know how to have them become light and easie, and where to have that assistance which will render them truly so to us.

So that I may conclude safely upon the whole matter, that this preparation that is necessary to be made for the Holy Sacrament, is neither such a mighty great matter in it self, nor so very difficult unto us, but that a competent endeavour and care may suffice for it, and therefore the more easie the preparation to be made is, the more inexcusable are those Men that neglect it, and cry out against coming to the Holy Sacrament, because of the difficulty of it. And I may make use of the reasoning of Naaman's servants with him, and apply it to our present case. *My Father if the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much more when he saith wash and be clean?* if there were really some very great difficulty in that preparation that is necessary to the Holy Sacrament, and if some considerable portion of time were needful for it to be made in; yet since God hath made it our necessary duty, and necessary to such mighty purposes of gain on our side, we should, and we ought in duty and wisdom too, to take care of it; how much more then, when neither much time, nor great pains are needful to it? and how inexcusable are those, that plead want, and difficulty

difficulty of preparation to excuse them, when such an ordinary endeavour would suffice against both?

Surely the regarding such a necessary duty is a matter of greater necessity and importance, than to be baulked upon so very frivolous and vain an excuse, and there depends more upon it, than will permit Men to think that every little pretence will be dispensation from it. In such cases Men pull off the vizard, and through all the thin pretences the true reason may be seen. It is not because Men cannot prepare themselves for the Holy Sacrament, but because they will not, it is not because there is any such difficulty in the thing, but because Men have no mind to it, and would gladly upon any pretence be excused from it.

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C H A P.

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## C H A P. X.

*I go on now to the fourth thing that was proposed on this head, viz that though men may have been careless, and indisposed themselves for the Holy Sacrament for one time, yet they ought to be more careful to prepare themselves against the next, for continual indisposition can excuse no man; so that if some present indisposition be upon a man now, yet care ought to be taken for its removal, that he may be fitted and prepared to Communicate the next time that providence calls him to it.*

**B**Efore I proceed to the direct purpose of this period, I shall take occasion by way of premisal, to speak something to the supposition of it, and to examine a case that we see often happens upon the reason thereof; it is too common a thing, for Men that make some conscience of communicating in the Holy Sacrament, yet frequently to intermit it, and to stay from it upon the reason of some present accidental indisposition, whether real or pretended I examin not, I will suppose  
it

it in their estimation to be real, because I will not think that any good Man will, or can stay from the Holy Sacrament upon any but what he thinks to be so. I would fain hope this is the reason, why many good Men, regular steady Christians, do indulge to themselves the liberty of neglecting the Holy Sacrament, so often as we see them do; I would fain hope (I say) it is upon the reason of some fancied indisposition that is upon them, and not either out of any disrespect to it, or opinion, that it is at their choice, when to observe it, or when to turn their backs upon it; the practice is too common, but the reason of it worse, and such Men must be let know, that it is not left to them when to come to the Holy Sacrament, and when not, and that a present indisposition will not warrant or excuse their staying from it. I think it a very necessary thing to offer something in cure of this opinion and practice, and to that end beg the consideration of these following things.

1. It is greatly questionable whether the supposition of the case be allowable. *viz.* whether any thing can so far indispose a regular good Christian, as to bring him into any guilt or danger in coming to the Holy Sacrament; I do really believe, that if a Man be fit for other services of Religion, he is fit for this, and ought no more to stay away from one, than he doth from the other. I cannot



cannot but wonder upon what reason it is, that Men that abstain not from other services of Religion because of that present indisposition, do yet abstain from this, or conclude themselves unfit for the one, when they think they are fit for the other. I am sure the Primitive Church thought otherwise, and by Canon made it necessary for those that joined in the other publick services of the Church to communicate in the Holy Sacrament too.

But secondly, if we should allow the supposition, and grant that such a Man hath contracted some indisposition, that doth render him unfit to communicate for that time, yet he must be told, that that indisposition whatever it be, cannot so warrant his staying from the Sacrament as to excuse him from sin in it.

I hope I need not tell you that I speak of moral indispositions now, and not of natural: sicknesses, and diseases, mischances and hurts, &c. supposing them not to be caused by our own follies and vices, do not come into our present account, or fall under this consideration; they are our miseries indeed, but not our sins, and the not performing the services of Religion because of them, is not our guilt; in all such cases that of the Prophet holds true, *that God will have mercy and not sacrifice.*

But I speak here of moral indispositions,  
such

such as either through carelesness, or humane infirmity, or the surprise and violence of temptation, or the cares of the World, and hurries of business, Men have fallen into, or from what other cause soever it may arise; and I say, howsoever those things may indispose a Man for the Holy Sacrament, yet they do not excuse his staying from it. So that Men should take great heed in this case, and not think that they may presently stay away from the Holy Sacrament, as often as they find themselves indisposed, or unfitted for it.

No Man needs propose the question to me, whether it be better to come in that condition, or to stay away, for neither is so much as good, and 'tis impertinent to inquire which is best; and there is no necessity of either in the present case, there is a happy medium between these two, which always is open, and should alwaies be taken by Men in this case. *viz.* to do their duty, and do all they can to remedy that which would indispose them for it. A Man may be sensible of his indisposition and sorry for it, he may endeavour and pray against it, implore the divine mercy for the pardon, and grace for the removal of it; and this he should do, but by no means sit down under it, and neglect so necessary a service of Religion by reason of it. I think it much better, and therefore should advise a Man rather to go to the Holy

ly Sacrament, though some present indisposition were upon him, than so far to yield to the one, as to neglect the other. I am sure a necessary duty ought to be done, and it is much better to do it as well as a Man can, then wholly neglect it, because he is at present unfit to do it so well as he should.

Now if Men would consider this, and remember that they never do well in staying from the Holy Sacrament upon this reason, and that they are not innocent in it, did they believe that every time they stay away from it, they sin in doing so, it would perhaps give some check to that liberty, which they commonly take in this case; and that they ought thus to believe, and thus to consider, will appear plain upon these two reasons which I but just name, because I have considered them already.

First that the Holy Sacrament is a necessary service of Religion, and it is a Christians indispensable duty, to partake of it, when he may. The Administration of the Sacraments is on all hands granted necessary to the being of a Christian Church, and the partaking of them necessary to the being a true member of that Church; God hath neither left it to our liberty and choice, whether we will receive it at all or not, nor whether we will receive it at this time, and not that; it is our necessary duty, and it is our standing constant duty, at least every time that the Church doth call us unto it. So

So that upon the same reason that Men think themselves obliged to go to Church, every Sunday, and joyn in the publick Prayers and Service of it, and do not count every little indisposition upon them a discharge from it, upon the same they ought to think it their duty to go to the Holy Sacrament, every time the Church administers it, and that every accidental indisposition can no more excuse them from the one, than the other; for the neglecting it at any time, is neglecting a duty, and neglecting a duty is a sin, and whatever any present indisposition may do towards the extenuating of it, yet it can never warrant or justify the same.

And that secondly, because that indisposition whatever it be, is our own only fault. This I have proved before; whatever indispositions may be upon us, whatever it is that we think renders us at present unfit to communicate, it is come upon us by our own only carelessness and neglect: we should, and with the help of God's grace we might live so, as to be reasonably fit for this service at any time, and it is our own folly and fault if we be not. And if this be true, it will soon satisfy any Man in this matter, unless he be so gross, as to think that one sin can excuse another, or that a Man's sins not in neglecting that duty, which his own folly and vice hath indisposed him for.

S E C T.

S E C T. I.

**A**Nd now I resume the purport of this fourth consideration which is this. Suppose some present indisposition and unfitness be upon a Man, and suppose it could be a sufficient excuse for his not receiving the Holy Sacrament, yet it would be so but for that own time only; speedy care ought to be taken against it, and all endeavour used for the removal of it against the next time; for continual unfitness can't possibly excuse any Man from it.

I lay down this against those that are alwaies complaining of their unfitness for the Holy Sacrament, and upon that reason stay always from it, hoping to be excused in so doing. Few things are more common than this; and we see it instanced almost every Day: there are some careless negligent persons on one hand, that care not to come up to the full communion of the Church, and there are some disaffected persons on the other that are prejudiced against it; but both sides when pressed to the Holy Sacrament, have the same plea of their unworthiness ready to make, and think to be excused upon the reason of it. One sort of Men plead it honestly, and upon real scruple, but it is to be feared another sort plead it upon design, and use it as an artificial excuse against that which  
they

they have no mind unto. I shall not consider these sorts of people distinctly and separately, but apply my self to the removal of this evil, and argue the unreasonableness of it, upon such considerations as may be proper for the cure of it, from what cause soever it may arise.

1. And first I desire to know, whether such Men count their unworthiness, and unfitness a Sin or not, and I ask this question, because I really fear a great many do not.

Men talk of their unworthiness, and complain of unfitness, and I fear count it a piece of humility to do so; and an acceptable thing to confess it, without ever reflecting sorrowfully upon it as their great guilt, and that which they are obliged to reform. It's no new thing to hear some Men declare tragically against themselves, and to seem mighty exact in confessing of those Sins, which they are far enough from hating, or resolving to amend, and we know too many that count it enough to confess their Sins, without any care to forsake them. And I am very much afraid, it is so with too many in our present case, they call themselves unfit, and unworthy for the Holy Sacrament, but I do not see them much concerned or troubled that they are so, no nor condemning or thinking worse of themselves because of it.

And therefore to any that pleads this in bar of his coming to the Holy Sacrament, I would

would make this inquiry in the first place; whether they look upon this unfitness as a crime, as a Sin in them or not? and one would be ready to think, that Men could never impose so far upon themselves, as not to think so, and that they must be under some great delusions, if they do; let us agree therefore upon this in the first place, and we shall better go on to what remains; this is really a great fault, which Men ought to be sensible of, and to grieve for, and not to look upon with indifferency, and unconcernedness, much less to value themselves upon.

2. Since then it is, and ought to be acknowledged to be a Sin, and a very grievous fault, I desire they will please to consider, and tell me if it ought not to be reformed and amended? one would think there were no need to ask this question, nor to doubt whether Men should amend their faults or not, this is a thing not to be so much as deliberated about, by any that consider what an evil Sin is in it self, what a train of mischiefs it draws after it, and what a dreadful thing it is, to live in that, which exposeth a Man to the wrath of an Almighty God; and such a thing unfitness for the Holy Sacrament is, if it be a Sin.

I would therefore have Men as sensible and fearful of Sin in this, as they appear to be of it on the other side, and then they would no more dare to continue in this, than

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be guilty of the other. We see some Men mighty sensible of the Sin of eating and drinking *unworthily*, and very fearful of being guilty of it. Now I would fain have them as sensible of the Sin, of being *unworthy*, and unfit to eat, and as much afraid to continue in it, the guilt is the same in both cases; and therefore if they be afraid of Sin upon a true reason in one, they will be so in the other also. I have often said (and some Men cannot be told it too often) that it is a bad sign to see Men scrupulous and tender only on one side, and 'tis an unaccountable thing to see Men so fearful of sinning in coming to the Holy Sacrament, but never to scruple or be afraid of sinning in staying from it, and being unfit to come. Starting and trembling at the thoughts of Sin in the one, but being regardless and insensible of it in the other.

3. If it be then a Sin, and what Men ought to amend, I ask in the third place, when Men intend to set about it, and endeavour to become fitter? must it be postpon'd, and put off as many other good and necessary things are, to hereafter, and to a time to come no body knows when? this is that unaccountable folly, that Men are so ready to condemn all others for in other cases, and therefore should not allow in themselves here.

All the great arguments, that combine against the folly and danger of procrastinating in repentance, and putting off good purposes

to



to hereafter, unite against this ; and Men that can urge them so readily to others in those cases, should not resist them themselves in this. Besides all which, there is one consideration which seems peculiar in this case, and ought to be of effect in it, and that is, that coming to the Holy Sacrament is one good means to become fit, and to redress the unworthiness that Men complain of. I said once before in this discourse, that few Men become more fit by staying from it, but many have by coming to it ; the longer Men stay away, the more unfit in all probability they will be, and one good way of coming fitly, is to come as well as they can.

So that it is not only here as it is in some other cases, the sooner Men set about redressing the unfitness, the easier the doing it will be, but the very setting about it, is a good part of it ; and I not only say, that the longer Men continue unfit, the more guilt they contract, and the heavier will the burthen of their Sin be ; the greater hazard they run, and put their duty upon the greater uncertainty and chance ; but they aggravate their unfitness, enhance their indisposition, and contribute to the difficulty of removing the same.

4. Having got thus far then, that this is an evil, that it ought to be reformed, and the sooner the better in all respects ; it will easily be considered, that if Men do sit down under their unfitness, it is plainly wilful and

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affected. Men that know their faults, and how greatly they are concerned to reform them, and yet do not shew themselves to be greatly in love with them, or enslaved to them; and Men that will not strive against their diseases, seem pleased with them.


Now in such a case the evil of the indisposition doubles, and whatever guilt results from it, swells in the same proportion: he that wilfully indulgeth to a Sin, enhanseth the guilt of it, and he that neglects a duty, because he cherisheth that which unfits him for it, hath a double guilt to answer for; involuntary, unaffected indispositions that come upon Men by surprise, by the violence of temptation, or upon the score of unavoidable infirmity, are pitiable, and capable of mercy, but he that cherisheth them, to excuse him from duty, stands doubly guilty before God.

5. To all which considerations I only add this one more, that whether Men do, or do not endeavour to redress their present unfitness for the Holy Sacrament, they must be let know, and they ought seriously to consider, that continual unfitness can never excuse them from it.

The receiving the Sacrament (I have shewed) is a necessary indispensable Christian duty, for which nothing that I know of, but natural incapacities can excuse Men, much less such moral indispositions as both should, and

and easily may be removed; a present accidental indisposition (how fair soever it may bid) yet can never excuse a single omission of the Holy Sacrament; and if so, then I am sure no indisposition can excuse the total continued neglect of it.

And of all things certainly it were most strange, if Men should hope to be excused in the continual neglect of their duty, upon pretences of continual unfitness to do it, this is so abhorrent to human reason, that it cannot be believed. No Man living will allow it in a Servant, in a Child, or in any that owes duty to him, and therefore hath no reason to hope that God will allow it in himself, especially when he considers, that that unfitness hath come upon him through his own fault, and might be redressed by some competent care.



## C H A P. XI.

*We are now come to the third and last Collection which was made from this Text, viz. That the true and only design of the Apostle in these words, and in this form of speaking, was to engage the Corinthians to that reverence and devotion in the Holy Sacrament, that became so solemn a service of Religion, as that is. I shall not need to stay long on this Argument, for I design but two things only upon it, and a little will suffice to dispatch them both.*

1. **I** Shall endeavour to prove that this is really the sense of these words, and the Apostle's great design in them.

2. I shall represent the reasonableness of the thing, and shew how fit and necessary devotion and reverence is, for them that approach to the Table of the Lord.

1. That this is really the design and purport of the Apostle in these words, I shall endeavour to make good from these three considerations. First, what the crime of the *Corinthians* was that these words were intended

to reform. Secondly, the phrase of the Text in which he endeavours that reformation. And thirdly the things that he prescribes in order to it.

I. Of the first of these I have given account already, and shewed that this crime of the *Corinthians*, which he so sharply taxeth, was a monstrous shameful disrespect, and irreverence to the Holy Sacrament, to which I shall only add that it was occasioned by these two precedent errors, and miscarriages. First, their not *discerning the Lords Body*, Secondly their intemperance in eating and drinking in the love-feast that preceded this Service.

I. They did not *discern the Lords Body*, they did not know, or they did not consider that this was a solemn service of Religion, and that there was a mystery in it, they did not understand the reason of its institution, that the Bread was Sacramentally the Body of Christ, and the Wine in the same sense his Blood, that both were to represent his Sufferings and Death, and that our partaking of them was religiously to commemorate and gratefully to adore the love of God to sinners therein.

In plain terms, as both the Sacramental Bread and Wine was part of what they had eaten and drank in the love-feast just before, so they looked upon them to be still the same, and but only a concluding morsel, and a grace Cup, with which that feast was to be

ended; for that ( as we ought to know ) was the common custom among the Jews, and these Grecians too; to conclude their feasts with a Loaf, or small parcel of Bread, of which every one took a little piece, and a Glass or Bowl of Wine, of which every one drank, in token or in pledg of that unity and love, that then was, and afterwards should continue among the ghests that had then feasted together.

Now being so ignorant and uninstructed ( as it seems they were ) in the reason of the Holy Sacrament, they might easily slip into this mistake, and knowing that their former feast was called *Agápe* a feast of love, and instituted to be a means of creating and continuing love among them, they might easily take the Sacramental Bread and Wine, ( being a portion of what they had eat and drank before ) to be but a *tessera cheritatis*, such a pledge and token of love among them, as was used at their other feasts.

This is the true state of this matter, and it gives us one plain account of the irreverence and profanation of the Holy Sacrament, which these persons were guilty of, and how strange soever the thing may appear to us, yet when these circumstances are considered, the wonder ceaseth, and the reason is plain.

2. And yet this was not all, nor the worst in this matter, for their intemperance was worse

worse than their ignorance and would more fatally prejudice their reverence and devotion; intemperance in eating and drinking is the greatest hinderance of devotion possible, and plain gluttony and drunkenness utterly inconsistent with it.

Now this you find the Apostle charging them roundly and plainly with, at least the richer sort of them, *v. 21. one is hungry, and another is drunk*; which though it may seem very strange, and one would think incompetent to a Christian, yet we have a plain account given us also how this happened.

For these love-feasts were upon a common stock, to which every one contributed his single portion; the poor (you may well think) could bring little or nothing, but the rich brought more, every Man (saith the Apostle) *according to the ability which God had given*. And perhaps among these *Corinthians* (than whom no Grecians were more vain & proud) every one might strive to exceed the other. Now hitherto all was tolerably well, only bating that some vanity might mingle with these contributions; but here was the first fatal miscarriage, these richer persons instead of casting in their symbols to the common stock, feasted upon their own single portions, and having much to eat and drink, did eat and drink accordingly, and commonly to that excess, as to be downright drunk, by that time they came to the Holy Sacrament, which was  
always

always celebrated at the end of these feasts, of such a portion of Bread and Wine, as was separated out of the publick offertories.

Now coming to the Holy Sacrament in this sad condition, no wonder if they profaned it indeed, and shewed so little reverence and regard to it: a drunken Man is every way as unfit for devotion as an ignorant Man can be; but when Men are both these, no irreverence can seem strange, that they are guilty of.

These two things occasioned this terrible irreverence and profanation of the Holy Sacrament, that our Apostle chargeth them with, and from which these words are intended to reform and affright them for the future, and by considering this, we may surely collect what the great purpose of them was: for as when we know a disease, we can guess easily what the design of the Physick prescribed in cure of it is; so by considering what the error and miscarriage of these *Corinthians* was, we may conclude what the design of the Apostle is in these words, which he useth in remedy of it; and therefore since the great fault of them consisted in their horrible irreverence, and want of respect to this service, we can assure our selves, that what he intended was to reform that fault, and bring them to that reverence and devotion that became a service of Religion, and that so solemn too, as he had instructed them the Holy Sacrament was. So that since their eating and drinking so irreverently



reverently and profanely, was that eating *unworthily* that he speaks of; their doing this worthily, would be by communicating with that Religion, reverence, and devotion that became a service so sacred as that was.

This (I am confident) is really the sense of these words, and a true account of the Apostle's intent and meaning in them; the consideration of which would be a great relief to scrupulous and timorous persons in this case, and let them see how much others pervert, and they themselves mistake the sense of this Text, who conclude every error and miscarriage in communicating, to be that eating and drinking *unworthily*, which the Apostle so sharply blames, and so severely threatens in these words.

I conclude by only adding this observation, if eating and drinking irreverently and profanely, be that eating and drinking unworthily which the Apostle means in this place, then eating and drinking with that reverence and devotion that becomes such a service of Religion, will set Men above the danger of that unworthiness; and if to bring Men to this was the only thing he aimed at, then Men do very ill to put other senses upon this Text, and to fright themselves and others, with the sound of words that do not concern them.

## S E C T. I.

**T**Here is a second thing also (I told you) to confirm us in this account of the Apostle's meaning here, and that is the phrase of the Text, both that in which the Sin, and the cause, and the punishment of it too, is expressed.

1. The word expressing the Sin is *unworthily*, which cannot signifie strictly, according to the literal sense of the word, nor ought to be extended to every indisposition, and to every failure to eat so worthily as Men should; for then neither could any Man living eat worthily, nor with his utmost care avoid doing it *unworthily*; this is a state of insuperable imperfection, and while we are in it, some stains will stick to our best performances, our best and most devout services will need the merits of Christ to expiate, and the mercy of God to pardon the failures of them. And had we not such a compassionate mediator to interceed for, and such a merciful God to pity and pardon us, we should have little reason to hope, that any of our services should be accepted by him.

And therefore if this were the sense of eating *unworthily*, there might be reason to fright Men from the Holy Sacrament as some teachers have done; nay and the command of our Lord to keep up the practice of it in his Church,

Church would be strangely unreasonable, it would be a hard thing to tie up his votaries to the observation of that, which they could never do so, as to hope to be accepted in the doing of, but must most infallibly incur a certain danger of very great punishment.

And therefore *unworthily* in this place must signifie indecently, unbecomingly, i.e. in other words irreverently and profanely, just as if Men were about common things; for the great indecency in performing services of Religion, is to do them carelessly, rudely, irreverently, as if they were, or we looked upon them to be common ordinary things, things which by our behaviour we were not to distinguish from the common services of life, and upon which we were not to believe that the momentous concerns of the divine favour and eternal happiness did depend upon. This the word doth signifie, and when both the nature of the thing, and the matter of fact related to, do require that signification; then I am sure we have all to justifie that exposition of it, that in reason can be desired.

2. The words also in which the cause of this miscarriage is expressed, conclude for this exposition of the Text also; now those are *not discerning the Lords Body*, which (as I have often shewed) signifie the not understanding the reason, purpose and design of this service, looking upon it as a common thing, and taking the Bread and Wine, to be but just

just like those, with which their common feasts used to be concluded with.

So that by considering what the cause of this miscarriage was, we are as plainly shewed, what it was, and wherein it did consist, as can be wished; for if they did not understand that this was a Solemn service of Religion, and if because of this they did eat *unworthily*, then that unworthiness must mean irreverence, common behaviour, want of devotion, that being the most natural and immediate effect of *not discerning the Lords Body*; the cause plainly points us to the effect, and gives us to understand what it was.

3. And the word in which the punishment threatened to the miscarriage is expressed, combines with the other also in assuring this exposition, now that is this startling word *Damnation*; which (as the next verse shews plainly,) signifies here temporal punishments; inflictions of sicknesses and diseases, and at most but corporal death.

Now I observe that these were those chastisements with which profaning Sacred things, and the Services of Religion used to be punished under the Law; instances of these are frequent in the old Testament, and well known to those that have considered it.

Thus *Nadab* and *Abihu* being drunk (as the circumstances of the story plainly shew) and in that disorder, and that mistake which it caused offering strange fire, are immediately slain,

slain, *Levit.* 10. and thus *Corah* and his two hundred Men with him, that durst usurp the Priests office, and presume to offer incense, as if it had been a common or ordinary thing, are destroyed by fire that came from God, *Numb.* 16. 35. Thus when the Men of *Bethshemesh* had ventured to rifle the Ark of God, and to look temerariouſly into it, they are ſmitten with divers puniſhments and Death, *1. Sam.* 6. 19. And thus when *Uzzab* being a common perſon put forth his hand to touch it, he is ſmitten dead upon the place, *2. Sam.* 6. 6, 7. And ſo when King *Uzziah* in his wrath and pride would perform the Sacredotal office, and preſume to offer incenſe, the Leproſie preſently broke out upon him, *2. Croni.* 26. 18, 19.

By which and many more ſuch it appears that this was the puniſhment, with which profaning the Services of Religion, and Sacred things uſed to be puniſhed among the *Jews*, and this being the puniſhment threatned, and actually inflicted upon theſe indevout *Corinthians*, it is a fair preſumption, that as their Sin was a profaning the Holy Sacrament, as a common thing, ſo the deſign of the Apoſtle was to correct, and prevent that profanation for the future, and engage them to that devotion and reverence that became ſo Sacred a Service, and institution of Religion.

The puniſhment plainly points to the Sin, and by knowing one, we may judge pretty well

well what the other was, and by considering what both were, we may conclude what the Apostle's design was in these words. *viz.* to prevent that Sin, and that punishment too for the future, and to bring them to Communicate with that Religion, awe and devotion, that such an institution of Religion might expect, and challenge from them.

I think these circumstances observable in the Text to be fairly argued from, and to conclude strongly for that account and exposition that I have given of it.

## S E C T. II.

**A**Nd yet there is a third thing observable to unite with these to warrant the present argument, and that is to consider the things that he prescribes to this purpose, and to remedy the precedent evil. I shall need to mention only these three following, all which are plain in the following part of the chapter. The first is the difference that there was, and ought to be made between their one Houses and that of God. The second is his instructing them in the nature and reason of this Service; and the third is his pressing the serious consideration of these things; there is a fourth that may be of some use to consider also, though it more immediately relate to the love-feast that preceded.

1. The first thing I observe used by the Apostle

Apostle to remedy this fault among them, is to consider that difference that there was, and ought to be between their own Houses, and that of God, *v. 22. what have you not Houses to eat, and to drink in? or despise ye the House of God?*

The plain meaning of which is this; you have Houses of your own to perform the common acts and services of life in; but God's House is appropriate to the service of Religion, and all things that you are required to do there, you ought to esteem as such, and consequently to look upon them as things that require great reverence and devotion, and a very differing respect and carriage, from what those things to be done in your own Houses do.

From whence as it is evident, that eating and drinking in Gods House, with as little reverence and Religion as they did in their own, was the fault; so what he designed in this discourse, was to bring them to that reverence that became the House of God, and those sacred Services of Religion that it was set apart, and appropriated unto.

2. The second thing that he useth to the same purpose, is instructing them fully in the nature and reason of this service, which it seems they were so ignorant of; this he doth from *v. 23. to 27.* where he lets them know, first that it was the last institution of our Saviour a little before his being betrayed. *The Lord Jesus in the same night that he was betrayed took Bread, and when he had given*  
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*thanks he brake it, and said take eat, this is my Body which is broken for you; after the same manner also he took the Cup, when he had supped, saying this Cup is the New Testament in my Blood.* And therefore this was a great deal more, than that common concluding morsel, and draught, which they had taken it to be; it was a solemn Service of Religion, an immediate institution of Christ, and therefore to be observed with another kind of temper & carriage, than they had profanely treated it with.

3. And the sober and serious consideration and remembrance of all this, is what he prescribes in the third place, as the most effectual cure of this miscarriage, *v. 28. Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup,* let him examine himself whether he understand these things, whether he know and consider wherefore this Service was instituted. Let him consider what a sacred Service of Religion this is, and what a measure of reverence and devotion becomes him, who doth approach the Table of the Lord, and there partake of the symbols of his most precious Body and Blood.

The consideration of all this will most effectually cure and restrain from all this rudeness and profanation, and powerfully ingage to that awe and reverence, that must needs possess all those that discern the Lords Body, and understand what they are doing, when they eat that Bread, and drink that Cup.

From



From these three things I think it sufficiently plain, that rudeness and irreverence towards the Holy Sacrament was the great fault of the *Corinthians*, which the Apostle so taxeth here, and endeavours to reform, and that therefore to bring them to reverence, devotion, and a sense of Religion in it, is his great design in all this discourse.

4. There is a fourth thing that perhaps may be pertinent to observe here to the same purpose, that is what he adviseth *verse 33, 34. Wherefore my Brethren when ye come together, tarry one for another, and if any hunger let him eat at home.*

This I confess seems more directly to concern the love-feasts, and to respect the redressing those faults that they were guilty of in them; but yet they do ultimately refer to the Holy Sacrament: for feasting together charitably like friends and Brethren, and eating and drinking at home that they might not do so then to intemperance and excess, would preserve them in the fitter temper for this Service, and from that intemperance and disorder, that was one great cause of their scandalous irreverence and profanation of it.

But I need no artificial and collateral arguments in this case; the matter is made plain by the former considerations which are all pertinent, and direct to this purpose, and render what I am contending for evident. So that it is really a wonder why many Men

should make such a pother and stir about the sense of this place, and the meaning of *eating and drinking unworthily*; to the perplexing the minds of scrupulous Persons, and frightening them from such a necessary part of their duty, as communicating in the Holy Sacrament certainly is.

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## C H A P. XII.

*And now there is only the second and last thing remaining upon our hands. For having shewed that to bring them to devotion and reverence in the Holy Sacrament was his design; it will be proper now to shew how reasonably he might undertake that task, and how becoming it is for them, and us, and all that engage in to that service.*

A very little may suffice on this, because the reason of the thing is plain, and because it is the common practice; of all the services in our Religion this is commonly revered most, and how indevout and careless soever Men are in others, yet they are alwaies seen serious and devout in this: the truth is Men rather offend on this hand, than the other

ther, I do not mean in being too devout and reverent at the Holy Sacrament, for that they never can be, but I mean in thinking so highly and awfully of it, as to be possessed with even a superstitious fear of it, which the great design of this discourse hath been to remove, and in order thereto to rectifie some mistakes of Men, that may have contributed to the same.

So that it is only to prevent that roving extravagant fancy of running into extreams (which I told you in the beginning of this discourse giddy minds are so incident unto) that I add this in the conclusion of this discourse, let Men see that I do not encourage any Mans light opinion or disesteem of the Holy Sacrament, but contend for it as earnestly as any Man, and to that purpose go on to remark the reasons upon which the becomingness, and necessity of it doth rely; I shall need little more than just to name them.

S E C T. I.

**A**Nd first I desire it may be considered, that this is an immediate Service of Religion, it is an institution of our dear Lord, and the observance of it an immediate act of worship, and expresseth our Homage and duty to our God.

How much soever Men may indulge to carelessness and indifferency in common matters, yet the universal reason of all Mankind

consents in this, that Religion is a serious thing, and that the profoundest reverence and devotion becomes them, who ingage into the services of it, and worship their God. Common sense teacheth Men to distinguish between a Temple, and a common House, and that Mens carriage in the one should be very different from what it is, or may be in the other, and those persons that can behave themselves as lightly, and irreverently in the Church, as on a Stage, &c. affront Religion and the service of it; give the open lie to their one pretensions in ingaging into it.

*Keep thy foot when thou enterest into the House of God, and be not hasty to offer the Sacrifice of Fools, saith Solomon, Eccle. 5. 1.* and they that do not both keep that, and their whole Man too, do not possess themselves with an awfull reverence of that great God they come to adore there, and whose immediate service Religion is, will not only offer the Sacrifice of Fools, but of something worse, not only defeat the end, and acceptance of their worship, but turn it into guilt, and an argument against them.

2. It is not only a service of Religion, but the highest, and most solemn service of it; so it hath been alwaies accounted in the Christian Church, and for that reason she hath used to consummate and end all others with it; it is her most august and Solemn Sacrifice, the great and chief rite of Prayer, and her most devout

devout and solemn Eucharist, and expreffion of praise.

And let me add (if it may signifie any thing with this Generation) it is the only band and testimony of our full communion with the Christian Church: our Baptism admits us into the Church, gives us a right to all the priviledges and blessings of it, and our going to Church and ingaging into the standing Services of Religion may procure us the Name of Christians, and cause the World to repute and take us for such; but it is this Holy Sacrament that makes us to be in full Communion with Christs Church.

It is a vain thing for Men to say, they are no Papists, no Sectaries, &c. they are Protestants of the Church of England, when they do not communicate in Sacraments with her, they may be of any Church, or of no Church for all they do without this; and for any thing I know to the contrary, they do as actually cut off themselves from the communion of the Church, by the neglect of the Holy Sacrament where they may have it, as they can do so by Heresie, Apostacy, schism, or can be cut off by the highest censures of the Church herself.

This is a thing that ought to stick fast upon some Mens thoughts; for if there be no Salvation out of the Church of Christ, and those be not in this Church that do not join in her communion, and those do not do this, who do not communicate in her Sacraments,

then some Mens conditions must be very hazardous, and then we may assert the necessity, as well as duty of the Holy Sacraments in order to Mens Salvation: the necessity I mean of them, where they may be had.

Nay I know not why I may not say more, *viz.* that the neglect of this Holy Sacrament doth as really forfeit Church membership as the want of Baptism doth hinder it; and those that live and dye amongst us, without receiving the Holy Sacrament of the Lords Supper, are no more true members of our Church than they that dye unbaptised; those that have been admitted into the Church, and come not up to the terms of its communion, may forfeit that membership as truly, as they who were never admitted into it, cannot pretend to it. For though Men may enter their names into a society, yet unless they submit to the Laws, and usages of it they will neither be accounted members of it, nor suffered to enjoy the immunities and privileges thereof.

3. I add it not only is, and hath ever been accounted the highest service of the Church, but that in which we are thought to have a nearer access unto, and a more intimate communion with God than in others.

I do not urge its being so lively and visible a representation of that which is the most affecting meditation in Christian Religion, and that upon this reason the Apostle tells the *Galatians*, that *Christ had been set forth before*

*fore their Eyes, and Crucified among them, Gall.*

3. 1. though that alone were argument enough to ingage Men to all reverence in it.

But I argue it upon another reason, namely that herein we are admitted to the Table of the Lord, where we not only feed with him, but feed upon him; *we eat his Flesh and drink his Blood*; we partake of him, and are incorporated into him: *we are made one with him, and he with us; we dwell in him, and he in us*; as our Church speaks.

I do not here undertake the dispute about *Transubstantiation*; that hard word, and that worser thing, which the Church of Rome hath taken upon her to teach as an article of necessary faith, contrary to the nature of a Sacrament, to the plain sence of Scripture, to the doctrine and beliefe of the Primitive Church and Fathers of it, and to the common sence and reason of all Mankind. It is a doctrine that came forth with the doctrine of their infallibility, and methinks 'twas very fit those two monsters should be born together, to let the World see how Gigantick the faith of a Romanist is; and I will say, those that can believe the infallibility of their Popes, after so many instances of their having erred, and contradicted one another, may believe the doctrine of transubstantiation, contrary to all, and the plainest evidences of things, that it is possible for Mankind to have.

But I am not for admitting dispute, or controversie into this discourse, and therefore let  
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that Doctrine pass, as a thing more monstrous, and abhorrent to humane reason, than any that is to be met with even in the Pagan Poetick Theology.

And yet notwithstanding all this, I add, and still assert, that we do as truly, and to all real effects partake of Christ in the Holy Sacrament, as if we did literally eat his Flesh and drink his Blood; our advantage is as real and true by the one, as it could be by the other.

The Church of England is for a real presence of Christ in the Holy Sacrament, but it is that real presence which the Primitive Church and good Fathers of it were for, and meant, when they spake to that purpose, *viz.* a real Spiritual presence, a conferring all the great effects and benefits of his Body and Blood, as truly as if they themselves were actually present there. A Spiritual presence is as real a presence, as a Bodily, and the effects and benefits of Christs Body and Blood are real things too. So that the Body and Blood of Christ may be said to be really and truly there, where all the effects and Blessings of them are really bestowed; and the Church of England doth truly say, that they are *verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper*; when all the real benefits and effects of them are taken and received by them.

This (I am pretty well assured) is all that the Primitive Church and Fathers meant by the  
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the real presence, and this is sufficient both for our faith, and comfort too; and while we are satisfied and assured of this, we neither need more, nor are obliged to puzzle our selves about any further questions.

Now this surely is such an argument and obligation to reverence and devotion in this service, as can never miss effect upon them that entertain the thoughts of it.

For if we do thus *discern the Lords Body* and take the Bread and Wine in the Holy Sacrament, not only to be the signs and symbols of our Lord's Body and Blood, but in a Sacramental sense the very Body and Blood themselves; and by the grace and blessing of God upon them, to convey to us all those effects and benefits, which the very Body and Blood, and our feeding upon them could do. Then certainly we cannot but pay all possible adoration to Christ when we partake of them, nor partake of them, without the profoundest reverence, that our Souls are capable off. And as I may well think, that those who can be rude, irreverent and profane, when they partake of these Holy Symbols, would be so to Christ were he visibly and corporally present: so I may safely say, that upon the same reasons that we would pay respect and reverence to our Lord, were he so present, we may, and we should pay it, when we partake of those things, which he hath instituted, and commanded us to observe as representations and memorials of him. The

The truth is, the argument in this case, is rather too great, than any way defective, and upon every good Heart the effect must be according. It can scarce fail of running our devotion into rapture, and our reverence into extasie and transport, to consider that the great God should put such an honor upon poor creatures, not only entertain us at his own Table, but give us his own Sons Body and Blood, and all the blessed effects and benefits of them to feed upon.

*Lord! what is Man, that thou art so mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou so regardest him!* and what name is bad enough for that Man, whom such love and condescension, such Majesty, and such Blessing, will not engage, and strike into the profoundest reverence and devotion, when he actually communicates in the Blessed Pledges of them all?

#### C O N C L U S I O N.

**A**Nd now I have brought this discourse to its designed conclusion, and have little more than to beg of God, that it may have at least some part of that effect upon Men, that was designed in it.

I do think a scruple of this nature necessary to considered; and I have endeavored to satisfy it as well as I can; and I hope no Man will blame the undertaking, how defective soever he may think the performance to be.

Is it not great pity that any scruple should keep Men in a total negligence of a necessary duty,

duty, and cause them to think themselves innocent in it?

Is it not a strange thing, and lamentable, that Men should lye under such fatal mistakes, as to think themselves at liberty, whether they will obey the last dying command of their dear Lord? or that their love and homage to him can consist with a constant disregard of it?

Is it not pity that Men should be easily persuaded to slight that, which is so mighty advantageous to all the great purposes of the Spirit and Salvation? and in which the greatest kindness and honour is offered to Men, that God can put upon them?

Is it not pity and a shame that so many should call themselves Christians, and of the Church of England too, and yet neglect that which is the highest duty of Christianity, and the great band of communion with the Church?

Is it not a shame for a Church to be without Sacraments, or for that Church to have members that never communicate in them?

If any things in the World can be pitiable, these things are so. And if any thing can be necessary, it must be to consider, what that thing is that is the great cause of them. Now this I would fain hope, is a fear that Men have taken up upon the reason of what is said in these words; I would gladly hope that it is neither obstinacy in some, nor carelesness in others that keeps them from the Holy Sacrament

crament, but only fear and scruple in all, fear of coming *unworthily*, and incurring that *Damnation*, that is threatned by the Apostle to all that do so come.

If this be the case of Men, they are really pitiable, and it is for the sake of them, that this discourse hath been undertaken, in which I hope something hath been offered, that may be considered to good purpose, and Men may find their account in.

1. For first Men by attending to it, may understand what the notion of eating and drinking *unworthily* is, and upon what reason the Apostle chargeth the *Corinthians* with it, *viz.* their not *discerning the Lords Body*, ~~their~~ being drunk at the Lords Table as well as their own, and putting no difference between these and common things, and that no Christians now can be guilty of the like Sin, but by something that sets them as far from discerning the Lords Body, and paying due respect to it, as they were.

2. And secondly, by considering this, Men may perceive both how far they themselves are from the Sin, and how little they need to be afraid of the same danger; if they find that by the grace of God they are secured from the one, they may confidently hope, that his mercy will secure them from the other.

3. They may hence also learn what a reasonable measure of knowledge, devotion, and care will most certainly set them above all  
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possibility of this unworthiness, and of that damnation threatned to it.

4. And fourthly by considering that it is their necessary duty, and the mercies and compassions of God as great, and ready to pardon, the common infirmities of humanity in this as in any other Services of Religion, they may learn to slight, and surmount all their fears in this, as they do in them, and to come with as much chearfulness, sense of duty, and hopes of divine acceptation in this, as in others.

5. This discourse may be of some use, to the directing, and encouraging Men in their preparations for this Holy Sacrament, and not fright them by the labour, difficulty, length of time, and curiousness of preparation, that some have accidentally done.

The effect of all which should be the ridding Mens minds of those unreasonable and superstitious fears that they have too generally taken up, in prejudice against the Holy Sacrament, and addressing themselves conscionably and chearfully unto it.

And I have nothing more, but to beg them to give it this effect, to take heed that they shut not their eyes against clear light, that they pretend not scruples to keep them in the neglect of a known necessary duty, and that they cherish not those scruples, and wilfully retain them, against all reasonable ways of satisfaction; there is not a worse, nor a more dangerous temper of mind than this, and he that considers

ders that for this cause God gave up the Hea-then to a *reprobate sence, to vile affections*, and left them at last to follow things which reason and nature did abhor, had need to fear transcribing the same temper of mind lest he succeed in the same dreadful punishments.

It were certainly much better to look upon our scruples of this sort to be, as they really are, diseases of our minds, and be as desirous and ready to have the cure of them, as we are of the diseases of our Bodies, to give God Almighty thanks, whose providence orders us these helps for the one, as well as the other. That so ( as the Apostle speaks ) *both be that sowes, and they that reap may rejoyce together*. The one for that they are satisfied and relieved, and the other for that God hath honoured him so far as to be an instrument in it. Which I pray God almighty grant may be the issue of all at last. Amen.

FINIS.

